

new

AUGUST 20, 1935

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Masses

The Rise and Fall of Abraham Cahan

By PAUL NOVICK

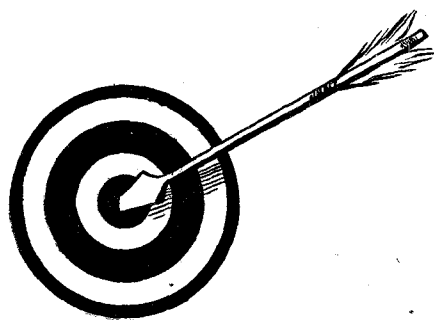
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X

On the Spot in

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MR. MENCKEN
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"The well of insanity"

THE D. A. R.'s
(God Save the King)

MAYOR LaGUARDIA
the "Little King"

PALE PINKS
really redder than the rose(?)

THE ROOSEVELTS
fireside chatters at home

THE MOVIES
and all that's in them

THE COPS
"funny people, if any"

THE COMMUNISTS
"it's easier not to be one"

THE (UPPER-
CLAWSS) ENGLISH
and "toodle-oo" and "cheerio"

WASHINGTON
"where ignorance is sublime"

new Masses

AUGUST 20, 1935

The W.P.A. Strike

A STRIKE of a new type began last week and spread rapidly throughout the five boroughs of Greater New York. Union bricklayers, aroused by the presidential executive order that they shall receive no more than \$85 for working a 120-hour month on the W.P.A. relief projects, made a motion in an emergency meeting of the Building Trades Council for strike action and won by a unanimous vote. The call for the walkout was not only answered by skilled union workmen of the building trades, but unskilled laborers and non-union workers also left their jobs in a mighty protest against the so-called security wage edict which threatens to destroy all that still remains of the American standard of wages. Those who have been so naive as to wonder why General Hugh S. Johnson was sent to New York as Works Progress Administrator need wonder no longer. The General's statements, threats and admonitions during the past few days show that his mission to Manhattan was of a similar nature to the one he made, by presidential order, to California in July, 1934. When he found he could not halt the great West Coast general strike with the usual softsoap methods, he called for vigilante raids against the strikers. The hoary red bogey failed to frighten labor in the W.P.A. strike into taking a backward step. A united front of labor, that one thing so greatly feared by employers of labor and New Dealers, is already in the making. Representatives of the Unemployment Councils, Workers' Unemployed Union and Federation of Architects, Engineers and Technicians met with the building trades strike committee and offered cooperation in the action by calling thousands of their members to join the stoppage.

CONFRONTED with this situation, President Roosevelt announced that the government does not recognize that a strike is in progress and ordered the strikers to be replaced through the National Reemployment Service by new workers. This refusal to recognize the controversy as a strike is obviously an attempt to get around



The Reason For The Strike

Russell T. Limbach

a paragraph in the N.R.S. employment form which releases the N.R.S. of responsibility where workers take jobs as strikebreakers. Another threat against the strikers came from New York State and City relief officials. The workers were told that if they walked out they would be stricken from the direct relief lists. But the fiery Congressman Vito Marcantonio had other opinions on the matter. "Under the Wicks Law, State funds cannot be withheld from anybody who is in need in New York State," he declared. "If any relief striker in my own district is denied relief, I will take the matter up on the floor of Congress." Spurred on by the action of the New York unions, the mass resentment of workmen

throughout the United States against the \$19 to \$94 wage scale has all the possibilities of developing into a nation-wide stoppage for the prevailing union scale. A. F. of L. unions in Butte, Mont., Allentown, Pa., Newark, N. J., Philadelphia, Pittsburgh have taken steps for strikes. Hundreds of Central Labor Unions are expected to follow with similar steps. Success of the action depends upon the mass character of the movement and the development of the united front of employed and unemployed skilled and unskilled regardless of political opinions. This strike, which has upset all the calculations of General Johnson who asserted emphatically twenty-four hours before the walkout began that he did not ex-

pect any "labor trouble," marks the beginning of a struggle which seems as historically important for labor as the great eight-hour day fight of 1886.

Unity Against Fascism

WHEN William Pieck declared at the opening session of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International that "Socialism or fascism is the question confronting mankind today" he had only indicated the problem. Subsequent sessions of the Comintern have been devoted to the very practical question of the manner in which Communists can aid in the defeat of fascism and hasten the coming of Socialism. Fascism has many opponents outside the ranks of the Communist and Socialist Parties. Their help is needed and they want to know its terms before they conclude an alliance against the common enemy. Pieck was specific: "Where parliamentarianism and remnants of democratic freedom exist, in spite of capitalist interference . . . there we defend parliamentarianism and democracy against fascism." Other speakers have stressed the point that Communists "make no other condition for unity of action than that it be directed . . . against the offensive of capital, against fascism and against the war danger." Here is a platform broad enough to lay the basis for a genuine people's front; but the Communists are acutely aware of the fact that concrete steps must be taken to make the alliance an effective instrument. Conditions vary in different countries. A mass struggle can, and must, be undertaken everywhere. In some countries the political struggle calls for the formation of a labor party, but in others, such as France, the practical question is that of whether or not the existing people's front is willing to form an anti-fascist government. Dimitrov answered the question in the affirmative: "The Communist Party will support such a government if the government has a platform against fascism and reaction."

POLITICAL opponents of the Communists have been quick to seize upon these declarations as proof of their thesis that the Comintern has abandoned its revolutionary program. They refuse to admit the distinction between a government based upon a united anti-fascist front, and the coalition governments entered into by Social Democrats for repression of a revolu-

tionary upsurge, as exemplified during the Ebert regime in Germany. They neglect the essential fact that the struggle against fascism will be an educative process, a medium by which the masses will learn for themselves that they must take the offensive against capital and move for the establishment of socialism if they are finally to eradicate the menace of fascism. Of course, Communists do not purpose to leave that lesson to be learned in a haphazard or accidental fashion. Communists, said Dimitrov, will say frankly to the masses:

This (the people's front) government cannot bring final salvation. It is unable to overthrow the class rule of the exploiters and therefore cannot finally abolish the danger of fascist counter-revolution. Therefore we must arm for the social revolution. Only Soviet power will bring salvation.

Every other speaker at the Congress has stressed this same point. The struggle for Socialism is an integral part of the struggle against fascism. Communists, in the words of the Manifesto, "disdain to conceal their views and aims." The masses themselves test the truth of their program in action.

New Deal "Security"

THE New Deal has come to full flower with the passage by both houses of the Wagner-Lewis Social Security bill and by the lower house of the administration's income and inheritance tax measure. Under the Wagner-Lewis bill the government will give a maximum of \$15 for each person of the minimum age of sixty-five. The states are free to set their share much lower than that if they choose, in which case the Federal pension is reduced. Or they can refuse to pass any old age assistance act. States may set the minimum age limit at seventy until 1940. Pensions for aged employees will not be paid at all until 1942. Meanwhile money will be raised by taxing employer and employee alike. The smallest pension that will be paid is \$10 but if an employee has been working for forty years, and if he reaches the age of sixty-five, and if he has been receiving \$250 per month, he will be entitled to the enormous sum of \$81.25 per month. . . . Along about 1938 the unemployed, or some of them, will begin to get unemployment insurance. Here again the whole matter rests with the states, which are empowered to set up their own rules and regulations. The federal govern-

ment will levy an excise tax on employers of eight or more persons after January 1, 1936. Where state unemployment laws are in force the employer may deduct 90 percent of the amount he pays the state from his federal taxes. No payments are to be made to unemployed until two years from the time contributions start. Other features of the bill provide such generous items as \$3,000,000 a year to aid the states (all forty-eight of them) in promoting the health of mothers and children and another \$3,000,000 to be appropriated to states on a fifty-fifty basis for assistance to the blind.

THE highly touted tax bill is in the same vein. As originally announced by the President the measure was ostensibly designed to rectify the terrific inequality of income that exists in America. It was referred to as a wealth-sharing plan and Huey Long shrieked that Mr. Roosevelt had stolen his thunder while Hearst denounced it as a "soak-the-thrifty" piece of skull-duggery. The House finally passed a bill designed to yield \$250,000,000, almost half of which was to come from inheritance and gift taxes. Senate progressives led by Mr. La Follette performed a major operation on the measure and turned it into a bill to crack down on the middle class. They lowered income tax exemptions to the point that \$200,000,000 would have been raised from levies on salaries ranging from \$800 to \$2,500 per year. The resulting outcry was too great and the senators were forced to beat a hasty retreat. The bill has been revamped again and the revised senate draft again calls for a revenue measure to produce \$250,000,000. Inheritance taxes have been eliminated entirely and estate taxes have been lowered. The striking out of the inheritance tax features will permit the rich to hand down their fortunes unimpaired. And if past ingenuity in the evasion of taxes by the wealthy means anything it is certain that there will be some pretty large fortunes to hand down.

Child Welfare

ONE hundred and thirty-five thousand New York City school children—18.1 percent of the elementary school population—are suffering from malnutrition, Dr. Adela J. Smith, assistant health director, reports. Weakened and dulled "many thousands of them take part daily in mental and physical

programs which aggravate the conditions from which they are suffering," the report said. Urban League officials estimate that malnutrition is much higher among Negro children, mounting to well over 23 percent. These statistics speak for themselves and nobody need be told that the increase of 70 percent since 1929 reflects the progress of the crisis. The results of undernourishment over long periods of time will not be fully known until later but an increase in juvenile delinquency and in such hunger diseases as tuberculosis can be foretold. Of course these conditions are not confined to New York City; they must be far worse in the more backward southern states.

More Outbreaks?

POLICE brutality is condemned in a sub-committee report just issued by the commission that is investigating the Harlem outbreak of March 19. The police are censured and their conduct termed barbarous in the report which declares that:

It is a grave state of affairs when the inhabitants of a large section of the city have come to look upon the men in police uni-

form as lawless oppressors who stop at no brutality or at the taking of human life. This feeling dates back over a long period and the measure of its intensity may be judged from the fact that the feelings expressed at our hearings were just as strong against the colored police.

Other sections of the report deal with the background of the disturbance and the sub-committee found that the outbreak was not a race riot, that it was spontaneous, that it was not instigated by Communists and that it had its genesis in unemployment and discrimination against Negroes. Although the report declares that Police Commissioner Valentine was amazed at the hatred exhibited toward policemen, it is significant that the very officers most vigorously condemned remain on the police force and that not one of them has been prosecuted. It is unnecessary to remind our readers that the economic conditions in Harlem have not been remedied. The sub-committee itself reports that unless the basic causes are removed similar disturbances can be expected in the future. The mere publication of reports which confirm what everybody knows is certainly not the same thing as removing basic causes.

Pullman Porters

THE American Federation of Labor last week granted an international charter to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Since the vast majority of porters are Negroes the practical effect is the granting of a charter, the first of its kind, to a Negro labor union. The A. F. of L. action followed closely on an employees' election in which the men overwhelmingly defeated a company union. The fight was led by A. Phillip Randolph and was waged against tremendous odds. Not only did the Pullman company spend thousands of dollars in its effort to prevent organization but the A. F. of L. chieftains gave the porters only lukewarm support. They consistently refused to give them an international charter and split Pullman employees up into federal locals. Toward the close of the fight the Pullman conductors stepped in and demanded jurisdiction over the porters. The granting of a charter at this time is an indication that Green and the A. F. of L. bureaucrats are finding it necessary to make concessions to those who have so persistently opposed the official policy of discrimination against Negroes. But one swallow doesn't make a summer and the fact remains that the A. F. of L. is still honeycombed with discrimination. Randolph has spoken vigorously in favor of united working-class action. He is now in a strategic position to press the fight to which he has committed himself. That struggle cannot be separated from the Pullman porters' very necessary fight for better working conditions and higher wages.

Common Enemy

A CLASH between Negro and Italian residents of New Jersey growing out of conflicting sympathies illustrates the danger inherent in regarding the Italo-Ethiopian conflict as a war between the races. Propaganda of this kind is industriously circulated both in Negro and Italian communities. Negroes are inclined to lend an ear to it because they are all too familiar with the fact that European nations have taken the lead in plundering Africa and Asia. Many Italian workers are falling victim to Mussolini's protestations that his is a civilizing mission in Africa. Nothing could suit the Italian dictator and his capitalist backers better than to have their robber expedition painted as part of an inevitable and eternal struggle between white and colored peoples. That would cover up the real

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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character of the adventure and help conceal from the world the fact that it is but an attempt to solve internal contradictions, inherent in capitalism, through a foreign conquest. It was this same quest for profits, and not the differences in color between Europeans and Africans, that drove French and British imperialists to invade and conquer other portions of Africa. Despite all of Japan's pretended friendship to Ethiopia, and other colored peoples, her capitalists have used the same methods in China and Korea. Anti-fascists should redouble their efforts to prove to the Italian and Negro workers that Mussolini is the common enemy of all workers. His defeat in Africa will do as much to liberate Italians as Ethiopians.

H. O. L. C. : A Postscript

IN OUR issue of July 30 we published an editorial, "Uncle Sam Forecloses," showing that H.O.L.C. is accelerating its foreclosures against small home owners. The latest total figure of foreclosures is 800. About 250 of these foreclosures have occurred in the last four weeks. In contrast to the hard-boiled attitude toward small owners is the H.O.L.C.'s generosity to big banks and insurance companies, which we here record in part. The Prudential Insurance Company of America received \$21,600,000 from the H.O.L.C. The closed First National Bank of Detroit got \$11,500,000. The closed Union Trust of Cleveland got \$10,100,000; and the open Cleveland Trust got \$8,900,000. The Railroad Co-operative Building and Loan Association got \$5,000,000, and Sears Roebuck and Company got \$3,500,000. One hundred and twenty institutions received over a million dollars each from Uncle Sam, and between then they totalled \$284,216,689. That was in November, 1934, when the H.O.L.C. had loaned \$1,872,000,000. Since then the H.O.L.C. has loaned another \$800,000,000, so the share going to big banks has probably increased, at least in proportion.

H. O. L. C. in the Colonies

THE Porto Rico office of the H.O.L.C. was in existence nine months without closing a single loan, while 2,200 applications for loans piled up. Finally, in June, the officials in Washington roused themselves to send down an investigator. The investigator galvanized the forty-five H.O.L.C.

officials in Porto Rico into action. During the first three weeks of July they actually closed six loans. If they keep up the good work all the business on file will be completed twenty-five years from now. . . . We thought the Porto Rico situation might be due to the hot weather there. But we looked at the figures for Alaska and found that climate is not the root of the evil. Swivel chair experts in the invigorating land of Alaska have yet to close their first loan, which leaves the southern caballeros six to the good.

A "Guffey" Bill for Textiles

CONGRESSMAN ELLENBOGEN of Pittsburgh is about to introduce a National Textile Bill. The bill, as it will be introduced, will contain only labor provisions, except for an inventory control device. Francis J. Gorman of the United Textile Workers is pushing the bill, and applauding the fact that it is a "labor" measure, in contrast to the bitterly opposed, fascist Guffey Coal Bill. He proudly announces that his bill contains a minimum wage of \$15, with provisions for establishing wages above the minimum, a work week of thirty-five hours, prohibition of child labor and night work for women, a guarantee of collective bargaining, provisions against the stretch-out, a dismissal wage, and so on down through the category of model labor provisions. Because of the widespread opposition to the Guffey Bill, which frankly seeks to enrich the coal operators at the expense of the workers and consumers and which adds to the autocratic power now exercised by John L. Lewis, the leaders of the United Textile Workers and their Congressional lieutenants are afraid to introduce a counterpart of the Coal Bill for the textile industry.

THE textile workers should not allow themselves to be fooled. The tactic after the introduction of the Textile Bill will be to write into the bill, probably in committee, provisions for the benefit of the mill owners. There has been no indication that either the leaders of the union or the Roosevelt Administration can, or will, withstand pressure by the textile magnates. The leaders of the United Textile Workers will write into the bill, after it has been introduced and after the first fanfare of publicity has been let loose, the same kind of industry provisions which made the textile codes so insidious a weapon against the workers. The commission

which will be set up under the bill will be the supreme body in the industry. It will make regulations to govern stretch-out; it will supersede the National Labor Relations Board with respect to self-organization and collective bargaining; it will license the mill owners; it will be the wage and hour disputes body. In short, it will exercise autocratic control over the destinies of the textile workers. Textile workers can prevent the bill from becoming the tool of the mill owners only by watching the progress of the bill with the utmost vigilance. Gorman and his legislative henchmen are prepared to capitulate to the pressure of the industry. Only the rank and file textile workers can keep Congress, the leadership of the United Textile Workers, and the bosses from turning the bill into a major weapon in the attack on working standards and conditions.

The Book Union

ORGANIZATION of the Book Union (offices at 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City) was first announced last April. Since then, readers throughout the country have shown increasing interest in its plans. The program of forwarding revolutionary literature—fiction, drama, poetry, class-struggle theory, criticism—the opportunity to keep in contact with the most important creative writing and thought, have already placed the Union on a firm basis. The first selection has been promised for early October. Advanced discussion of it will appear in the "Book Union Bulletin" which will be issued monthly beginning in September. Membership in the Book Union entitles subscribers to the "Bulletin" as well as to discount on all books. To aid organizations and clubs that desire to build libraries, the Union has offered one free membership for every ten members secured by a group. The dues of \$1 a year are more than compensated by reductions in price of books offered: and those writers whose revolutionary work is of importance and value but who are handicapped by the unwillingness of bourgeois publishers to accept or press their work, are now assured an audience. At the same time, readers are assured important books at reasonable prices, and readily obtainable. The Book Union becomes another powerful weapon against vigilantism, Hearst and his cohorts and the ever-growing attacks on free thought and free speech.

Youth Gets Administered

This undertaking will need the vigorous cooperation of the citizens of the several states, and to insure that they shall have an important part in this work, a representative group will be appointed to act as a National Advisory Board with similar Boards of citizens in the states and municipalities throughout the country. On these Boards there shall be representatives of industry, labor, education and youth because I want the youth of America to have something to say about what is being done for them—*President Roosevelt upon signing the executive order establishing the National Youth Administration, June 26, 1935.*

ON August 1, President Roosevelt appointed the thirty-four members of the National Advisory Board of the newly created and much ballyhooed National Youth Administration. Not a single representative of a youth organization was among them.

The official press release announcing the Board declared that "the members are outstanding representatives of labor, business, agriculture, education and youth" and the Washington gentlemen of the press, who are wont to take the New Deal's word for anything, blandly informed the public in the evening papers that the young people of the nation had representatives on the Board.

Even a cursory examination of the membership of the Board would have revealed that aviatrix Amelia Earhart was probably the youngest thing around. But how were the newspaper boys to tell that? The official announcement didn't state the ages of the members or the names of the organizations they represented.

A really thorough examination would have revealed that the members of the Board were either Administration notables or insignificant unknowns and that only a few educational and social work representatives had the slightest familiarity with the problems of youth. Among those who are to act in youth's behalf are:

Henry Dennison, president of the Dennison Manufacturing Company since 1917. Business representative on the National Labor Board of early N.R.A. days.

Owen D. Young, Chairman of the Board of the General Electric Company.

Adolphe Augustus Berle, Jr., brain trustee extraordinary. Privately a member of the Board of Directors of the

Bankers' Trust Corporation, Institutional Securities Corporation, American Molasses Company and several foreign corporations.

Hiram Percy Maxim. Well known inventor of that notorious lethal gadget the Maxim silencer, the greatest contribution to gangsterism of the century. Less known and for good reasons, as the inventor of battleship armaments.

Bernarr Macfadden. The man who brought physical culture to America in 1898, when he established the Physical Culture Magazine. More recently the publisher of The New York Graphic, Liberty, True Story, True Romances, and The New York Daily Investment News.

Certainly the President can boast that he has appointed the Forgotten Man to the National Advisory Board of National Youth Administration, or, to be more accurate, that he has appointed an entire squadron of Forgotten Men. Who, pray, has heard of Kenneth Farrier, the Reverend Edward R. Moore, Miss Mae K. Sargeant, Thomas J. McInerney, Donald R. Murphy, Frank L. Boyden? This is not to say that they are not good men and true, perhaps indeed more concerned about youth's problems than Messrs. Dennison, Young, Berle, Maxim, Macfadden, but certainly the public should be informed of their qualifications, of the organizations which they represent.

And certainly the public should be informed of the extent of the relationship of the National Youth Administration with the new military school for homeless boys at Clyde, California—the first military school of its type in the country. Reports point to a very intimate relationship between the N.Y.A. and Clyde's unique "Citizen's Training Center."

According to an Associated Press dispatch Aubrey Williams, executive director of the National Youth Administration, pressed a key which sent an electric spark to explode a bomb—appropriately enough—at the dedicatory exercises of the school. The opening sentence of a feature article about the school in the Boise, Idaho News (July 24,) declares significantly:

The "save the next generation" project now in the limelight through President Roosevelt's National Youth Administration, already is marching along toward success here in this once-abandoned wartime shipbuilding town near Martinez.

The authorities of Clyde's Citizens Training Center make no attempt to hide the fact that military training is part of the center's curriculum. Full military regalia is worn by the 225 youths who have been recruited from the Federal transient shelters of California. The entire center is organized on military lines. The older boys act as corporals, sergeants, lieutenants and captains.

The center authorities insist, of course, that "no arms are used," that the major purpose of the center is to, as Dr. George O. Smith, originator of the institution, has said, "provide some place where disillusioned youth can take stock of himself, learn the rudiments of a trade, correct glaring educational deficiencies." According to a journalist who visited the center "the goal is to turn out youths desirable for apprentices in navy, coast guard and merchant marine . . . even aviation subjects are handled as part of the work." And according to the center's official regulations, the present group of cadets will be aided in entering C.C.C. camps as junior instructors, the army, the navy or the coast guard.

The success of the center so far, according to the Boise News writer, "indicates that the Citizens' Training corps plan of Dr. Smith will be easily applicable to all parts of America." Dr. Smith, let it be said, is an expert on such matters and will doubtless go far. He has been at this juvenile Americanization work since he left the army in 1919.

Already his program has caught the imagination and patriotic fervor of California; State Works Progress Administrator Frank McLaughlin has given it his endorsement. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Vierling Kersey seems to be particularly aware of the promising anti-labor significance of the entire National Youth Administration program.

"California youth," declared Mr. Kersey in The Los Angeles Examiner on July 22, "are loyal to, and proud of America and her institutions through a wholesome recreational and educational program and an opportunity for constructive expression of energy in return for life's necessities, they would not turn to the preachers of hatred and radicalism who seek them as converts."



THE WEEK IN GERMANY

Boris Grellick

The Rise and Fall of Abraham Cahan

PAUL NOVICK

ABRAHAM CAHAN, editor of The Jewish Daily Forward, was seventy-five years old last month.

There was no fanfare, no celebration. The romantic press called it modesty. But love is blind and has no memory. Cahan *did* appear before Jewish workers not so long ago, May 5, at the opening of the convention of the *Socialist-controlled Workmen's Circle*. He was booed down. . . .

The "Patriarch" could not think of meeting his "flock" again; there was no festive mood inside the offices of the "great" newspaper either. The paper is fast declining. The Cahan-Lang-Hearst scandal has cost The Jewish Daily Forward a great deal. When the turmoil began—with the appearance of the Lang articles in the Hearst press—Cahan told a stormy meeting of the Forward Association: Give me a couple of weeks and it will all be forgotten. But his old tricks do not work any more. The anti-Soviet articles in the Hearst press of the then assistant editor of The Forward made a tremendous and lasting impression upon the workers—quite different from the impression Cahan hoped to create when he helped negotiate the contract between Lang and Hearst. And so The Forward, which has steadily declined for the last ten years, began losing ground more rapidly. Many thousands of readers gave it up in disgust. The Forward was condemned at public meetings throughout the country. The loss in prestige The Forward suffered among its own following was even more significant. Dissension was created within its own ranks. In an effort to remove Cahan, B. Vladeck, for years manager of the paper, handed in his resignation. A rumor has it that he was forced to withdraw it. Cahan triumphed, but The Forward is a house divided.

Cahan is going from one pyrrhic victory to another. In order to "justify" his Lang-Hearst deal, he introduced to Jewish workers a series of articles by Fred Beal which immediately found their way to Hearst. These will again have their repercussions among the readers of The Forward and Cahan will no doubt pick up another white-guard scoundrel. Cahan's hatred for the Soviet Union, for the Communist movement, knows no bounds. The man is mad with rage. It is his ambition in whatever is left of his life to besmirch the Soviet Union in any way possible. In his rage, he is smashing The Forward, but he cannot be stopped. Cahan is The Forward.

He possesses an instrument which is still powerful, not only among the Jewish masses. His tie-up with Hearst shows it. The Forward is a national, even an international cesspool of white-guard propaganda. It is a breeding ground for characters like Lang and Beal—to

be later turned over to Hearst. One may expect the Hitler press to pick up the Beal articles next. Cahan, like Hearst, cannot be ignored, no matter how disgusting the job of fighting him may be. A glimpse at the career of this man Cahan may explain a thing or two. How has he risen?

CAHAN became the editor of The Jewish Daily Forward on March 15, 1902. On that day, there appeared on the front page of The Forward the following "box":

To the Readers

Tomorrow's (Sunday's) Forward will appear in eight pages. That is how it will appear every day from now on. There will be much more to read than heretofore and little by little improvements will be made in every department.

The news and all articles will be written in pure plain Jewish Yiddish, and we hope that every line will be interesting to the entire Yiddish-speaking people, young and old.

In tomorrow's issue there will be found articles:

1—About Irish or Italian gentiles who have become converts to Judaism because of girls of the Jewish Quarters. These are true occurrences, remarkable love stories collected from our life here in America.

2—About poor Jews who send their children to college or to High School.

3—Usurers in the sweat shops. Tricks employed by the bosses to get the Jewish workers into their hands.

4—From here and there. A new department in The Forward which will contain little sketches, short and snappy remarks, stories, anecdotes, jokes, remarkable things happening the world over.

5—There will be more news than heretofore. All other departments will be left as they are. The new novel, *The Usurer's Daughter* (from Jewish life in Russian Poland and in America), will begin Saturday.

This was the program laid out by Cahan while taking over the socialist Forward. The "pure plain Jewish Yiddish" meant the polluted "Americanized" Yiddish used by Cahan, which is neither Yiddish nor pure. Cahan's contempt for Yiddish—the vehicle of his success—has been too often pronounced in the columns of The Forward. It can perhaps only be matched by his contempt for the readers of The Forward.

But paragraph No. 1 in Cahan's program was the thing. It was amplified two weeks later, March 29, 1902, by the following announcement on an inside page of The Forward:

To the Readers

First, about the news as printed in The Forward. 1: The very latest news. 2: The most interesting and most important news to be found in the entire world. 3: A lot of Jewish news, particularly news about the present turmoil in Russia against the Czar.

Second, about special articles which we will print about matters of concern to everybody, or

which are interesting to know. We have collected piles of facts about marriages in the Jewish Ghetto (quarters), about girls of the Ghetto who remain unmarried, about girls who marry too young, about the old bachelors of the Ghetto—various interesting reasons why a girl stays unmarried. For instance, are all unmarried girls not pretty? The answer is "No." And there is a lot to tell.

Class struggle? The toiling immigrant's miserable existence? Unions? The Socialist Party? The new editor of the struggling socialist paper on the East Side who had just come from five-years' apprenticeship in the yellow New York English press was bent on making a success of the paper with Hearst's methods. "What is a Pretty Woman?", "Men Who Boss Their Wives," "Wives Who Boss Their Men," "Unmarried Girls," "Three Unmarried Girls," "What Price Beauty," "Too Young Brides," "Little Girls Who Get Married," "The Bride Who Was Spanked"—these were the "feature" articles let loose by the new editor. Where the struggle of the tailors for a 25 percent raise got only seven lines, a story: "Did Florence Burns Eat Supper With Walter?" got a full column.

Cahan started The Forward along the easiest way toward financial success, over the protests of many socialists. Some readers broke through the columns of The Forward with their protests. (Cahan did not have a full grip yet.) One asks (March 29, 1902) whether the new "features" have anything to do with scientific socialism. . . . Another contends (March 31) that a socialist paper cannot be the organ of *all* Jews. "A socialist paper must be socialistic and must be a workers' paper." This reader was answered in a long editorial on April 2, to the effect that "for this purpose we never needed here and do not need now a daily Jewish newspaper." The Forward, the editorial contends, is a "socialist paper, not of a group, not of a sect, not even of a party, but a paper to sow and to disseminate socialist thought, to preach the socialist system among the great mass."

And so the "socialist system" for *all* Jews was preached with the aid of material very often surpassing Hearst in vulgarity and salaciousness. The "Bundle of Letters" (letters from the lovelorn, with editorial advice) introduced in the revolutionary year 1905 (and kept up ever since) became a pillar of Cahan's "socialist system."

The crowning glory of Cahan's career as a sensational yellow journalist was his great effort at Flemington, N. J., not so long ago. Cahan would not trust his staff alone to cover the Hauptmann-Lindbergh trial (he had several "hands" there, too). The seventy-five-year-old "patriarch" more than once was on the verge of fainting in the suffocat-

ing court house. But he stuck to his post with the tenacity of a man who has his heart and soul in the criminalistic sensations that made his paper "great." And his detailed descriptions of the "fat" and "not so fat," "un-attractive" and "nearly attractive" women in the jury box was a sample of vulgarity and imbecility, true to the tenets of Hearst and Beatrice Fairfax.

In the court house of Flemington, Cahan was in his own element. When he undertakes to dabble in political economy and socialist theory he is so crude and outlandish as to be amusing—were it not for the tragic fact that he is the editor of a socialist newspaper. His *History of the United States* (Yiddish) was the laughing stock of East Broadway before the war. There is no better way of getting an idea of Cahan's "serious" writings in *The Forward* than to imagine Beatrice Fairfax writing about politics . . . though she might not be using the street corner invectives against political adversaries Cahan is employing against Communists and—recently—against revolutionary and militant elements in the Socialist Party.

THIS tells only a small part of the sordid history of Cahanism. Naturally, Cahan's yellow journalism was an expression of crass political opportunism. For a fuller appreciation of this phenomenon—Cahanism—it would be necessary to present some detailed episodes, to relate how *The Forward* preached the "socialist system" in election time, how it fought De Leon and Bill Haywood, how it fostered corruption and—yes—gangsterism in some unions.

One would have to examine the record of *The Forward* during the World War. *The Forward* has the distinction of having been both pro-German—before the United States entered the war—and pro-Ally afterward, and each time violently pro. All these acts of Cahan and his colleagues were of course motivated by crass opportunism, a hatred for revolution, for class struggle, just as the pornographic methods of the "successful editor" were not merely products of a diseased mind. Cahan himself, like Hearst or Bernarr Macfadden, is a product and a representative of certain elements. The small-town petty-bourgeois immigrant "intellectual" whose "education" consisted of a short term in a school for reform rabbis in Vilno (at that time Russian Poland) was from the very beginning muddled up in his "revolutionary" ideas. In America, he became the representative of the petty-bourgeois elements among the Jewish immigrants and of workers and trade-union bureaucrats with petty-bourgeois psychology. The muddled, intellectually half-baked immigrant went in for "Americanism" with gusto, for the vulgar "Americanism" and patriotism of a Hearst and for Hearst's kind of journalism. He looked down upon the "uneducated" Jewish immigrant with contempt. One of the by-products in the struggle for the establishment of *The Forward*—the struggle against the Socialist Labor Party Jewish Daily



A PATRIARCH'S BIRTHDAY

Del

Abendblat—was the fight between the "literate" and the "illiterates" (the Russian terms of *Gramotnie* and *Bezgramotnie* were used). To be able to speak Russian and to study to become a doctor, a lawyer or a dentist meant to be "literate," educated. To this day, Cahan, the chief of the "literate," regards a doctor with the eyes of a small-town petty trader. When the Menshevik leader, Abromovitch, first came to the United States, in 1908, Cahan could not find better praise for him than to say: "From a distance he looks like a doctor. . . ."

Cahan has the petty trader's respect for the rich and has himself aspired to become rich (his salary is \$20,000 a year "and expenses"). He has regarded the Louis Marshalls and Adolph Ochses and Felix Warburgs with admiration and has always given them support in "Jewish activities" (hence, his particularly high standing with *The New York Times*).

Cahan attained his goal. Under his guid-

ance *The Forward* became a financial success. Under his guidance the clique now known as the Old Guard in the Socialist Party was built up and it is no accident that the Old Guard is strongest among the Jewish Socialists brought up on the "system" of *The Forward*.

Neither is Cahan's present tie-up with Hearst an accident. One may see in the present collaboration only a continuation of old relations.

SOME years ago—I think it was 1922—in an article in *The Nation*, O. G. Villard crowned *The Forward* the best newspaper in the United States. One can hardly imagine what impression this created among people who happen to know Yiddish. . . . The Nation seems to have learned a little since that time, but Mr. Villard's statement was a reflection of a widespread opinion built up by the publicity of a financially powerful institution—*The Forward*—in control of the

bureaucracy of a number of unions and in alliance with William Green and Matthew Woll.

There is hardly anything more grotesque than the impression created about Cahan and The Forward among certain elements unfamiliar with the Jewish language. Whatever the merits of Cahan as a fiction writer he is primarily the builder of The Forward and the leader of The Forward crowd. If it is correct to picture Cahan the way The Times does, one might as well shout from the rooftops that Bernarr Macfadden and W. R. Hearst are the most "literary," most "beneficial" and most "humane" publishers in the United States.

It is only recently, as a result of the rift inside the Socialist Party and as a result of Cahan's alliance with Hearst in the struggle against the Soviet Union that some elements outside the Yiddish-reading public have learned something about the true Abraham Cahan. But this struggle was his undoing in many a sense. Cahan got away with his most unscrupulous, Hearst-like, struggle against De Leon, Bill Haywood, the Jewish

dramatist Jacob Gordon, against all protesters inside the socialist movement. Things are much more difficult, however, when it becomes a matter of fighting the Soviet Union. Here, Cahan cannot do with impunity what he did in his years against his many adversaries. He is paying the penalty.

In his crusade against the Soviet Union, Cahan has been doing for years what Hearst began doing after he returned from his visit to Hitler. I shall not attempt to review here something which has been going on in The Forward for thirteen years without a stop. I will quote one instance, relatively an unimportant one, to give an idea of the state of Cahan's mind and of what he is capable.

On May 5, The Forward printed an article about the Moscow subway. It wound up with this unique idea: In former days the Russian people were made to build palaces for the Czars, now they are made to build palatial subways for Stalin. . . .

As if Stalin is keeping the subway to himself, riding back and forth all the time. . . . When the Soviet Consulate opened its headquarters in New York, The Forward wrote

editorially (March 31, 1934): "The palace was once built with workers' blood and now it will be maintained with workers' blood." The Forward printed an article by Harry Lang stating that there is a tax on the dead at the cemetery of Kiev and that they are evicted from their graves in case their relatives do not pay the tax (Forward, Dec. 6, 1933). More recently The Forward told its readers through the mouth of Fred Beal that in the Ukraine they are making sausages out of human flesh. . . . (Forward, June 27, 1935).

Cahan's material about the Soviet Union matches his material about the Ghetto in luridity. But the reader, even The Forward reader, does not appreciate the anti-Soviet tales. The alliance with the Hitlerite Hearst against the Soviet Union is not much appreciated, either. Cahan has become among great masses of Jewish workers and intellectuals and poor middle men—the *Jewish Hearst*. That is why he was booed down so contemptuously in Madison Square Garden. That is why he dare not show himself before Jewish masses.

Way Down South

1. Georgia Is Misunderstood

SASHA SMALL

THE officials of the state of Georgia have one explanation and answer to every question you ask them. "*You don't understand.*" They shake their honorable gray heads and smile indulgently when they say it.

Realizing that quotations from Robert Burns' *I Am a Fugitive From a Georgia Chain Gang* and John L. Spivak's *Georgia Nigger* would not be the best way to start a friendly conversation with the Prison Commission—chief keepers of the 130 chain gangs in the state—I went to the State Library in search of some learned southerners' analysis of the merits of the chain-gang.

The gray-haired librarian was astonished at my request. There weren't any books about the chain-gang. She had never heard of any being written. All she had were the Biennial Reports of the Prison Commission dating back to before the war. That means, of course, the Civil War.

But she hesitated to let me see them. I was not a resident of the state. They weren't really supposed to show these reports to outsiders. Why not? Outsiders don't understand.

However, she finally decided to let me see them. Until the report for the year 1874, they were nothing but "respectfully submitted" lists

of the names, sentences and crimes of those serving time.

The Prison Commission of the year 1874 had a lot to say for itself. It began with a history of the organized penal system that went back to 1815—the year of the big reform—when branding and cropping of ears were officially abolished and replaced by prison—which means chain-gang—sentences. It went on to state that until the war the prisoners had all been white. Under slavery the plantation owners had been able to take care of their own "justice." "Murder and rape were punished by hanging" and that took care of that.

But the war changed everything. Most of the convicts were drafted into the Confederate Army. Sherman pardoned all except the lifers when he got to Georgia and when things began to get reorganized in 1872 and 1873 the Prison Commission discovered that the bulk of the prisoners were black. "The only difference between the colored convict and the colored people at large was found to be that the former have been caught and convicted of crime while the latter have not."

Following this philosophical statement came the news that the Negro prisoners were no good for anything, whereupon the Prison Commission comes to the point and proposes

that the convicts should be leased out "from one to five years at the governor's discretion. The contract would relieve the state of all expenses except the salary of the principal keeper."

The only conditions set by the Prison Commission were the recommendation that the convicts should be worked "no more than 10 hours a day, that there be no sabbath work and no corporeal punishment unless absolutely necessary to secure discipline."

By 1876 this scheme seemed to have worked so well that the Prison Commission recommended extending the term of leasing to 20 years, with the proviso that no "sub-letting be allowed" and that special attention be given to providing labor for the North Georgia Railroad Company and four big coal companies.

In 1908, Governor Hoke Smith in a special message to the state legislature demanded the abolition of this system. The wardens were developing a very profitable business of trafficking in convicts, receiving as much as 25-50 percent in profits from the lessees, and the laws were not being obeyed by the companies. For instance, "the law in coal mines requires that the state's convicts shall be worked only from sunrise to sunset and have specified rest hours. This is being violated on every hand. There is too frequent whipping for shortage of tasks.

The evidence further disclosed that there is no effort to keep the whites and blacks separated while at work or in eating quarters. The Negroes and whites eat in the same mess hall though at separate tables. This is improper and in violation of the law."

Leasing was abolished and a monthly "whipping report" instituted. With the exception of the whipping report, which has been abolished since the lash was banished by official decree, the Georgia chain-gangs today are just what they were in 1908. Of this the present Commission proudly informed me.

I met only two of the three worthy gentlemen who compose the Prison Commission, Judge Vivian Stanley and Judge G. A. Johns. You don't understand, but everybody who hasn't got any other official title in Georgia is called "judge." Judge Stanley is a doddering, stuttering old man, who wanders around the spacious office with a bunch of papers trembling in his hands. His "Yo-huh-ou d-d-don't und-understand" became a little more irritating than the others after a while.

Among the things that are misunderstood are the following facts:

Prisoners on the Georgia chain-gang work from sunrise to sunset. Actually work. They are awakened at three, have eaten their breakfast (which the rules specifically state must include one cup of hot coffee) by four, are out on the trucks and ready to swing their pickaxes when the first rays of the sun appear over the horizon. The last swing comes with the last dying ray of the setting sun so that the prisoners are surely back inside the stockade by dark. When it rains, the law provides that they must have slickers, and the watches of the armed guards assure the same number of work hours as the sunlight.

Prisoners must be punished in order to insure rigid discipline and to "induce the performance of good and faithful labor" during working hours. Punishment must take the form of "solitary confinement, restriction of diet, use of spikes, fastening them in stocks in such a way as will cause them to be restricted for not longer than one hour at any one time." A strict record of punishment must be sent to the Prison Commission each month. I read through dozens of them; they were all alike: "For sassy talk, for talking back, laziness, trying to run away." Hours hanging in stocks by wrists and ankles. Days of lying in solitary confinement. One ex-convict told me—"Stocks? Everybody gets put in the stocks and in the sweat-box, too. Plenty of men have been in the stocks for hours on end. I have. They're not allowed to keep you hanging in them for more than an hour on end, but they take you out, pour some water over you and after an hour they put you back in again."

"I can't tell you how it feels. You just hang there about so high (he indicated six inches) from the ground, by your hands and feet, and soon you're just the same as dead. You don't feel nothing. Only, you know how a wrench is when you tighten it? Every time you turn it, it gets tighter and

tighter? Well, every time you move your finger just a little bit—like that it goes tearing down your arms like flames of fire. When they take you out, you don't feel nothing. They could stick a spike in your arm or leg, and you wouldn't feel it."

To prevent any further misunderstanding the book of rules presented to each warden states specifically that "Guards shall not be permitted to strike a convict except to prevent escape, in his own defense, or in that of another" and "in all cases of sudden death, by violence, accident or otherwise(?) without previous illness they shall cause to be held an inquest."

Judge Johns is a somewhat younger man, but equally eager to prove to you that you don't understand. For instance, you don't understand that the Georgia chain gang system is the most humane in the world. Georgia's prisoners are not locked up into stuffy old jail houses. They are kept out in the open, in the fresh air, under God's blue sky. They are even housed in steel cages which permit the breezes to pass right through them and are provided with canvass tarpaulins which can lock these breezes out so not a breath of air gets inside!

They get vegetables to eat which they grow themselves. They get meat once a week! They get fat on the chain gang. You see, we people in the north just don't understand.

R. B. Eleazer—educational director of the Interracial Commission, is far more a man of the world than the Prison Commissioners. He's been around. "I've been in this anti-lynching game for many years," he informed me. He wasn't anxious to discuss the chain-gang system beyond the fact that it was not all that it should be. He was very anxious to parade all his printed material which had been doing so much to promote understanding between the races. One quotation will suffice. It is part of a little folder written by Mr. Eleazer entitled "Popular Fallacies About Race Relations."

"Fallacy No. 5 'But Negroes want to break down the social line between the races!' Who told you so? The finest types of Negro leaders deny it emphatically. They say frankly that they prefer the society of their own people. Perfectly natural too. Besides, experience does not justify any such charge. Negroes want justice, not social relations."

He became quite flowery on the question of segregation. I quoted to him from the rule book governing chain-gang procedure which states:

"These buildings must be so constructed as to completely separate whites and Negroes." I repeated to him one sentiment of Judge Johns that "he, like many southerners, likes some of his niggers. He helped them get along. He helped some of their children through school and they made good and he respected them for it. *But they can't come through my front door.*"

Mr. Eleazer's answer was very enlightening. He didn't say that I didn't understand. He asked me if I knew of Roland Hayes. I told him I did and that I had heard him sing and that he was a fine artist.

"I made Roland Hayes," he informed me, "I sent out the first publicity about him. I'm proud of him. But *he* can't come in my front door."

After expanding on the accomplishment of the commission—better Jim Crow schools, more Jim Crow buses, better Jim Crow houses and hospitals—very few but better ones, we got around to Angelo Herndon. No, the Interracial Commission would do nothing for Herndon. "*If a youngster wants to commit suicide, we will not stop him from becoming a martyr.*"

The Rev. John H. Hudson is a very singular person. There aren't many like him. No polite smiles about him. He foams at the mouth at the mention of the name Angelo Herndon for whom he furiously demanded the death penalty in January, 1933, added to the insult by the jury which recommended the merciful sentence of 18-20 years on the chain-gang. Herndon was finally snatched from his hands by that "host from hell," the I. L. D., which got him out on bond.

I heard him preach. His text is still the same speech he made in court demanding Herndon's life. He rants and roars against the Communists. As for Angelo, his evil smile which screwed up his black beady snake eyes gleamed as he said, "We'll get him back."

The reverend feels that it is his holy mission to rid the world of Communists and particularly Angelo Herndon, who right in his own court room challenged his authority and showed him up for what he is—a hysterical, vicious old hypocrite.

At his invitation I went to court, the same room in which Herndon was tried, to watch him prosecute a young woman for highway robbery. Maybe she was guilty and maybe she wasn't. You could never guess from the state's case against her. But in his charge to the jury, old man Hudson rose from whispered threats to roars of rage—and though you would never understand the connection between sending this girl to the chain-gang for ten years to pay for her "crime" and what Hudson was saying he did manage to shout, "We've got to uphold the law or turn the country over to the Communists."

Dr. Bussey of Waverly Hall, Georgia, is very old. For 40 years he's been the Harris county doctor and part of his duty is the supervision of the prisoners on the chain-gang I visited. The "model" Georgia chain-gang—just the other side of the mountain of President Roosevelt's private Warm Springs estate. He seems to be the only man in Georgia who deplores the existence of cages as sleeping quarters for the prisoners. "Sister, that's no place for men—black or white—that's no place for any living being."

The prisoners on the chain-gang feel real

confidence in him. They come to him, Negro and white alike, with their ills. One youngster, he looked no more than 20, came up to show the doctor what the shackles had done to his left leg.

He had the leg of his striped trousers rolled up and the ring, about half an inch thick to which the chain is soldered, hung loosely around his ankles. The skin on his leg was raw. Not even the rags, which all prisoners wind around the lower part of their legs just above the ankle to hold that ring in place, had stopped its gnawing attack.

2. On Behalf of Angelo Herndon

ALFRED HIRSCH

IN THE stately reception room outside the Governor's office in Atlanta's State Capitol was a picture of Roosevelt, a bronze bust of Governor Eugene Talmadge, free copies of his own newspaper, *The Statesman*, secretaries, newspapermen, photographers and a cluster of ten or fifteen individuals representing Post No. 1 of the Atlanta American Legion and the Fulton County (Atlanta) Americanism Commission. The latter is composed of the Legion, the local Men of Justice, the D.A.R., the Daughters of the Confederacy, the Elks and—you can make up the rest of the list for yourself. The aim: "Wipe out Communism." The text book: Mrs. Dilling's *Red Net Work*.

The unusual gathering was in our honor: to hear what the four of us—Miss Shirley Hopkins of Truro, Mass., Emmett Gowen, LaVergne, Tenn., Bruce Crawford, Norton, Va. and myself—had to say to the Governor about the Angelo Herndon case, about the petition campaign initiated by the International Labor Defense, about the slave law dating back to 1861 on which Herndon had been convicted.

We were shown into the Governor's office. The acme of courtesy, he immediately asked us if "these other gentlemen" who crowded in at our heels, were members of our party. We answered in the negative but hastened to assure Georgia's chief executive that we had no objection to their presence.

Talmadge, arch opponent of Roosevelt's A.A.A. program which he claims encroaches on states' rights by taking money from the Georgia tobacco farmer via the processing tax to hand it to the Iowa wheat grower, does not hide his national political aspirations. Himself the owner of several farms, he is a stocky, vigorous man about forty. Only the day before, at the grand opening of the Georgia tobacco market he had stated that "the issues of the next election are those of Americanism vs. Communism," (i. e. Roosevelt is the "Communist"). While this gave the lead to our friends who had joined the conference uninvited, the Governor was careful to give no indication of that fact.

"That ring is too tight, doc," he said. The armed guard was behind us in an instant. "You want it loose enough to slip off, don't you?"

Old Dr. Bussey poked around the prisoner's leg and looking up at the guard with a stern glance said quietly, "I want a bigger ring put on that man's leg—right away." His voice carried authority and the smile on the young Negro's face (he is serving a life sentence for murder) told me that he knew the doctor's word was law and the ring would be changed.

On the contrary, he listened attentively while we told him (largely for the benefit of the group standing behind us) that we had not come to Georgia to discuss economic or political issues. Our object, we said, was to present the Herndon case to him, to indicate the rather obvious bias of the conviction, to urge a pardon and to suggest that the Governor send a message to the state legislature proposing repeal of the antiquated law on which Herndon had been sentenced to eighteen to twenty years on the Georgia chain gang.

The Governor told us he had never read the record of the case, asked questions about it, advised us to go through the proper legal steps leading to a pardon and assured us he would give it careful consideration. He admitted that the case "smacks of a political conviction" and that he is "not so hot on political prosecutions."

While we were finishing our account of the relief demonstration which had led to Herndon's arrest, Mr. A. L. Henson, president of the local Americanism Commission and head of the State Veterans' Bureau with offices in the Capitol, broke in:

"Your Excellency," he said, "these folks are misrepresenting the facts. If Herndon had been indicted for begging bread anybody in Georgia would subscribe to that. But Herndon was trying to set up a nigger soviet republic. That's what he's convicted for. . . . I've even got the map he had."

Our questions brought out the fact that this map was a chart showing, through shading, sections of the southern states in which the Negro population predominates, which serves as the cover for the pamphlet "The Communist Position on the Negro Question." Herndon admittedly possessed this pamphlet but, by no stretch of the imagination, had he been shown to have advocated its contents. Such distinctions are nebulous ones to many Georgians, blinded by a hate of something beyond their understanding.

Kenneth Murrell, leader of the local American Legion, addressing us rather than the Governor, now blurted out: "You people

come here representing one of the most gigantic rackets in the United States, the racket of Communism."

We were quick to demand proofs which Murrell assured us he could easily supply from his "files."

Still with marked courtesy and to end the dispute, Governor Talmadge interrupted. Murrell, ill at ease and not given to successful speech making, breathed relief.

In reply to a query as to how a snake bite had left him a few days before, the Governor said drily: "Some say it must have killed the snake." The interview was ended.

We left the office with Murrell, Henson and their retinue. Murrell swelled visibly as he told us that "we drove the Communists out of Atlanta six months ago." This being the case we were at a loss for an explanation of the need for the Fulton County Americanism Commission, organized just two months ago, "first sponsored," Murrell gloated, "by our Legion Post."

"You know," he confided, "ever since we cleaned up on the Reds, I've been getting threatening phone calls. It scares my wife. . . . And the cowards won't come out in the open."

We assured him that "all well-known men are subject to nuisances of that kind." Missing the point, Murrell smiled at the compliment.

The proofs of the racketeering charges, it seemed, were in Mr. Henson's office. We went there. Now we learned that the documents had been returned to Solicitor General Boykin's office. Henson tried unsuccessfully to make an appointment for us. "Anyhow," he said, "we have a whole truck load full of that stuff and it would take days to weed it out."

"But," added our stalwart Legionnaire Murrell, "we'll get it out for you by this afternoon. . . . And you don't mean to tell me you all came down here just for the trip, do you? Or just for expenses?" We answered, knowing that it was useless to answer.

Suddenly, Murrell's trump card: "Your names are in Mrs. Dilling's *Red Net Work*, aren't they?" We admitted that that distinction was probably ours, "along with Mrs. Roosevelt, Rex Tugwell and others." Murrell, seriously, his blank eyes lighting up for the moment: "Of course. They're both Reds. Mrs. Roosevelt advocated social equality between white and black." (This was news to us.) "And Tugwell," he added, "wrote that collective farms might be a good idea."

The influence of the Governor's campaign speeches was becoming clear. So was our Legionnaire's attempt to divert the discussion from the Herndon case.

Henson referred laughingly to the attack on us in Alabama a few days before which left two bullet holes in our car. "I guess it was a frame-up like the Governor of Alabama said."

Then, even more jovially, "You don't

have to be afraid here. Nothing will happen to you. But, if anyone in Georgia takes a shot at you, you won't get off so easy. We don't miss the mark in this state."

"Do you know," another man said, "that Herndon called the Supreme Court names, talked against the Governor and the President?" Bruce Crawford answered that "Roosevelt had made clear his opinion of the Supreme Court following the N.R.A. decision." "And," he went on, "you only have to go back downstairs to see a Democratic governor who openly opposes Roosevelt."

Henson, a shade more clever than Murrell and his followers, came back to the point, or thought he did: "We're going to do our level best to see that anyone can say anything not accompanied by an overt act. This government under the Constitution has created the best government in the world. It's nearly

perfect. We admit there are economic upsets but these occur everywhere."

Still asking for proofs of nefarious racketeering, getting more and more evasive replies, we left.

We learned later that we were followed constantly until we left Atlanta towards evening. Evidently we constituted a dangerous menace to our "nearly perfect" government.

Henson, Murrell and their little coterie, were probably thinking: "The 'Reds' have been repulsed. Victory is ours."

The four members of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners felt differently: They had seen the bared minds of emotionally patriotic fools. . . . They have hopes that continued pressure upon Governor Talmadge will bring about Herndon's freedom.

3. Bloody Sunday

BORIS ISRAEL

BEHIND the Bloody Sunday at Porter, just outside of Birmingham, lay years of hard-fought organization throughout the Alabama mine fields, years marked by dynamite and deputies and repeating rifles, by starvation, strikes, lock-outs and cheating at the scales, betrayals and theft from the miners and the raw open sore of Jim Crow keeping the haggard whites and the driven Negroes separated.

But again and again they "came back for more." Broken once and again, they formed anew and by the Fall of 1934 the coal fields of Alabama were 95 percent organized in the United Mine Workers of America. Negro and white, they met together, as they worked in the mines together, planned and organized together and they struck together.

But the story of Porter's Bloody Sunday is not part of a strike history. It came unexpectedly, following a mass meeting of the Union which had a jubilee spirit about it, which was partly to celebrate the fact that the majority of the Porter miners had joined the Union, partly to show those remaining unorganized what strength they would gain by joining their fellows who carried Union cards.

The Porter mine was one of the last two or three that wasn't 100 percent.

Three thousand met that day, in picnic spirit, heard Union speakers and formed for a procession through the mine camp. A truck was at the head. There were white miners and Negroes, men and their wives and their daughters, some with babies in their arms. Scattered among them were some who wore dark three and four buttoned suits, the trousers creased and showing where they had lain folded.

Most of the men were wearing overalls, washed clean and faded light blue. Their

shirts were open at the neck or buttoned without ties.

The procession started slowly, raggedly, up the narrow valley, then halted. A score of county and mine deputies stood, armed, at the short bridge which marked the entrance to the mine camp.

Several of the Union leaders went forward and stood there talking to these hulking men with their rifles and forty-fives hanging ugly at their hips.

Bill Alexander was the chief deputy. He did the talking for "the laws." He might as well have said, for the company, "All right," he said, "so long as it's all peaceful."

But the deputies must be allowed to search the truck first and all members of the procession were to lay down all "arms," their sticks which they had picked up in the woods.

They agreed. The men stepped out of the uncertain lines and flung clubs aside, the deputies took a couple of revolvers out of the truck and put them in their car. Over the buzz and hum of the talk from one to another there between the hills, these miners discarded their paltry defenses, grouped together again and started moving slowly forward, relying on the word of a killer not to kill.

Bill Alexander had notches in his gun before this day. Some say he wore a steel vest beneath his cloth one from fear of the hatred people bore him. He watched the clumsy, hunched shoulders of the men as they ambled by him, the thin faces of the womenfolks, and his lips were shut grimly together, a heavy foreboding lay over his broad, mean face.

Other deputies paced nervously, climbed slipping up the hillside, or fingered the butts of their revolvers and glanced quickly from

Alexander to the procession and back to the chief deputy again.

A few workers stood in doorways. These were the shacks of the Negro miners and, in a couple of doors, dark women stood, cheap cotton-print dresses sagging from their sharp shoulders, feet below bare on the worn, dry and splintered boards.

Of a sudden it came, like quick rain out of frowning skies, that in a moment hides the sun. From the hillsides the sharp flat reports crackled, one on top of the other and thin wisps of smoke faded away into the bluish, clear air. The lead bullets splattered dully against rocks, and bounced screaming away again, filling the air with terror and whizzing death, searching for flesh.

Women held tight, hunched their thin shoulders about their babies and ran frantically for shelter. Men stopped, stood in their tracks, bewildered, their big, calloused hands hanging open at their sides, not knowing what to do.

Some made for the row of houses on the hillside. Ed Wollin and Harrison Collins, both young Negroes in their thirties, were among these. A Negro woman, scab supporter in a previous strike, a union hater now, ran out of her house with a rifle and aiming at the scattering procession.

Bill Alexander came around the house behind her and, in the interest of law and order, shot an unarmed miner down in his tracks. Then he chased another between the houses, his revolver smoking, stood over him and shot again.

Some of the marchers had fled at the first shot—fled to their own homes to get the guns they had never thought of bringing to a peaceful gathering. When they returned, Alexander and his gang had gone, leaving two Negro union men lying dead in their own blood, a number of others nursing wounds, white and Negro.

It is significant too, that it was a white union man who refused to be intimidated and swore out warrants for Bill Alexander for the murder of his two Negro fellow workers. Bond was set without even the formality of the deputy's entering the jail. The bond was signed by the president and the treasurer of the Gulf States Steel Company.

Bill Alexander, apparently on the basis of this "good work," was made Chief Deputy for the steel company and the charges against him dropped. Union men who might have been witnesses were arrested and charged with carrying concealed weapons during the attack.

Seemingly it was all forgotten. But, "Bloody Sunday" will remain in the unwritten annals of the Alabama workers. I shouldn't like to be in Bill Alexander's boots. These workers don't forget, they can't forget, for they face daily the same lawless "law," the same harsh conditions, the same ever-impending, incipient terror. And they face it grimly, but unafraid.

Walter Lippmann and Soviet Russia

CORLISS LAMONT

BACK in August, 1920, just fifteen years ago, The New Republic published a special supplement entitled "A Test of the News," by Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, with the assistance of Mrs. Faye Lippmann. This study carefully examined the news reports on the Russian Revolution in The New York Times from March, 1917, to March, 1920. Throughout this period The Times was, of course, consistently and bitterly hostile to the Communists in their struggle against the White counter-revolution and foreign intervention.

The Lippmann-Merz article found that the news reports in The Times were misleading, inaccurate, profoundly influenced by editorial policy and more often than not downright false.

Summing up the situation for both The Times and other newspapers, the authors wrote: "From the point of view of professional journalism the reporting of the Russian Revolution is nothing short of disaster. On the essential questions the net effect was almost always misleading and misleading news is worse than none at all. . . . The chief censor and the chief propagandist were hope and fear in the minds of reporters and editors. They wanted to win the war; they wanted to ward off Bolshevism. . . . They were performing the supreme duty in a democracy of supplying the information on which public opinion feeds and they were derelict in that duty. . . . Whatever the excuses, the apologies and the extenuation, the fact remains that a great people in a supreme crisis could not secure the minimum of necessary information on a supremely important event." This report in which Walter Lippmann played such a leading role constituted a noteworthy service on behalf of honest journalism in general and the truth about Russia in particular. The question I want to ask is how well or how ill Mr. Lippmann has lived up to the standards which he once so eloquently advocated for The Times and other newspapers.

Let me present in sequence some of Mr. Lippmann's more important and characteristic utterances about Russia since 1929. In "A Preface to Morals" (May, 1929) he says, referring to Bolshevism and fascism: "It is proper, I believe, to talk of them as one phenomenon, for their fundamental similarities, as most everyone but the Bolsheviks and the fascists themselves has noted, are much greater than their superficial differences. They were attempts to cure the evils resulting from the breakdown of a somewhat primitive form of capitalism." And as recently as March, 1935 (The New York Herald Tribune) he lumps together Communists and fascists as

"profoundly reactionary in the exact and literal sense of the word."

Turning to the specific situation within the Soviet Union, Mr. Lippmann tells us at the Academy of Political Science (March, 1931): "It may be possible for the Russians, who have started from zero, to build up a satisfactory social system by centralized initiative. . . . But what they may be able to do in a nation which has no capitalistic inheritance certainly provides no analogy for the United States, where the most highly developed capitalism the world has ever seen is a going concern." Then in The New York Herald Tribune (Oct., 1931) he writes: "The truth is that Russian Communism has not yet grown up to the problems capitalism is facing. For Russia is still at a stage in the development of manufacturing industries where there is not enough of anything, where the demand outruns any visible supply, where, in short, no plan to increase production can be very wrong. . . . That the Russian effort is impressive I should not for a moment deny. . . . In its economic aspects it is impressive not as a solution of our present problems, but as another way of solving the problems we have already solved." (sic!)

Once again we find, in The Herald Tribune (June, 1933) Mr. Lippmann asking: "Who that has any instinct for reality supposes that a system of control which may work in the simple and relatively primitive Russian economy among a people habituated to political absolutism could be initiated in the United States?" Finally, in "The Method of Freedom" (June, 1934) he declares: "One might as well go to Massachusetts to study the habits of the palm tree as to go to Russia to learn about the prospects of modern capitalism." And he goes on to say that insofar as planning works at all in the Soviet Union, it is because we find there "an economy of scarcity."

I think that these citations give a fairly accurate picture of Mr. Lippmann's views on the Soviet Union. I have searched his recent writings in vain to find signs of a more profound understanding. To tell the truth, I cannot even discover a reference to, let alone an analysis of the outstanding fact about the new Russia, that is, the almost complete abolition of private property in the means of production and distribution. That this is the central feature of socialism Mr. Lippmann, who was once, so I am told, a Socialist himself, must well know. Why does he not mention it? It is the socialization of private property that enables central social-economic planning in Russia to proceed at such a pace without any fear of individual capitalists throwing monkey wrenches into projects designed on

behalf of the people as a whole. It is this same socialization that makes feasible the balancing of production with consumption, of supply with demand, by always ensuring the masses of workers enough money to buy back the goods they produce. There is no reason for supply to outrun demand, because demand will never lack purchasing power as it does so constantly in the U. S. A.

Yet when Mr. Lippmann talks about Soviet planning, his entire stress is on how "simple" and "primitive" the country is; and how "habituated to political absolutism." Taking into consideration the enormous achievements of the first Five-Year Plan and the second, now almost half-finished, does Mr. Lippmann really think that Russia is still "simple" and "primitive?" Are those the accurate terms to apply to a nation that in industrial production ranks second in the world? And if it is an "economy of scarcity" that makes planning possible, then why with the increasing complexity and abundance of Soviet economic life, does not planning start to break down instead of becoming more efficient and successful?

Never once does Mr. Lippmann stop to consider that since socialist planning depends so largely on the mechanical equipment, technical knowledge and cultural level of the people concerned, such planning might in the very nature of things work better in a country like the United States than in Russia. And is America's economy all built up, all the consumption demands of the population satisfied? You would think so, when Mr. Lippmann is talking about the U.S.S.R. But when he applies himself to the home situation, he writes a whole column (January, 1934), pointing out that there is an almost infinite amount of productive work that needs to be done here in order to ensure to everyone a decent standard of living. In short, the distinction between built-up countries and ones that are not is a relative one and clearly insufficient as a test of whether planning is applicable.

As for "political absolutism," can Mr. Lippmann be entirely unaware of the genuinely democratic procedures in Soviet planning that make his talk about "centralized initiative" so misleading; of the fact that the minds of millions of workers criticize and contribute to the Five-Year Plans; and of the existence of literally hundreds of planning agencies throughout the country with local responsibility and initiative? And what are we to think of a writer reputed to be a scholar as well as a journalist who claims that fascism and Bolshevism are "one phenomenon" when in Soviet Russia private property has been abolished, agriculture collectivized, so-

cialist economic planning instituted, the capitalist cycle of depression and mass unemployment eliminated, woman freed from her traditional status of inferiority, racial prejudice wiped out, anti-religious dialectical materialism established as the official philosophy, education and culture stimulated as never before, the dictatorship treated as a temporary, transitional measure, war-making imperialism relegated to the past and a peaceful socialist internationalism held up as the final goal? That Mr. Lippmann should calmly call such diametrical and far-reaching differences—and there are others—between Communism and fascism merely “superficial” is perhaps the best possible proof of his own unblushing superficiality.

Now Walter Lippmann is one of the most influential journalists and authors of our time. There is no man writing today who has more of a responsibility to be careful, just and heedful of the whole truth in any situation. Yet in regard to Soviet Russia, Mr. Lippmann is either ignorant of or deliberately passes over, not just matters of fairly well-established opinion, but obvious and irrefutable facts that are acknowledged by the most bitter enemies of the U.S.S.R. Indeed, it looks very much to me as if he

had not bothered to read even the dispatches of his own Herald Tribune’s Russian correspondent, Mr. Ralph W. Barnes. And it is highly significant that though Mr. Lippmann has the time and energy to visit quite frequently the chief countries of western Europe, not to mention various other peoples and places, he has in the seventeen and a half years since 1917 never once taken the trouble to go to the Soviet Union. For one who purports to be an impartial and reliable commentator on world affairs this is a truly remarkable record. If Lippmann, together with his precious “sense for reality,” would make a trip to Soviet Russia, he might find things there that would surprise him. A visit to the U.S.S.R. is, of course, no guarantee for a perfect understanding of the country, but it at least gives the opportunity for clearing up elementary misconceptions.

I do not think that Mr. Lippmann can be excused on the ground that it is his function to *interpret* rather than report the news. Certainly his “Today and Tomorrow” column in The Herald Tribune is more than mere interpretation. But anyway, not to quibble over terms, Lippmann has the obligation to interpret on the basis of the available facts. And this obligation he has sadly neglected in

the case of Soviet Russia. Furthermore there is a line to be drawn somewhere between fair and unfair interpretation, reasonable and unreasonable. All in all, therefore, I believe it justifiable to say that Walter Lippmann’s recent writings on the Soviet Union, under whatever classification they may belong, have been guilty of those very things which the Lippmann-Merz report of 1920 so heartily condemned.

“On the essential questions” (pertaining to U.S.S.R.) “the net effect” (of Lippmann’s comments) “was almost always misleading and misleading news is worse than none at all.” “A great people in a supreme crisis” (the depression) “could not secure” (from Lippmann) “the minimum of necessary information on a supremely important event” (the progress of Soviet Russia). And I wonder if we cannot conclude, too, that “the chief censor and the chief propagandist were hope and fear” (in the mind of Walter Lippmann). He “wanted to win the war” (of saving capitalism); he “wanted to ward off Bolshevism.” In any case he was purporting to perform “the supreme duty in a democracy of supplying the information on which public opinion feeds” and he was “derelict in that duty.”

On A Soviet Steamer

(A letter from an American woman traveling to the Soviet Union, to her husband in the United States.)

On Board M S Smolny, Sunday.
Dearest Husband:

Our first twenty-four hours on the Smolny have not as yet provided us with the slightest disappointment. Oh yes, one. We are not permitted to smoke in the dining salon nor in the ladies’ salon, but can smoke anywhere else on the boat. Already I have been over most of it and I find there are only ten third-class passengers, most being first and second, so I have a cabin all to myself and except that the third class cabins are lower in the boat there is no difference except in the number of beds, two in the first, four in the third. All alike have windows (port-holes) opening directly outside, there are no “inside” cabins anywhere, it seems. Each one has a desk under the port, between the bunks, a washstand with cold water only, a mirror above it, a closet and hooks, etc., lights over the bunks—quite as comfy and clean as any liner afloat. There is no distinction between first and third except lower cabins and a separate dining hall for the third—exactly the same food served to all alike and all having access to the same smoking and recreation rooms.

It is both amazing and amusing to see how readily everyone talks to everyone else, as compared with the middle-class aloofness of

our former ship companions. It gives one a foretaste of what life should be and can be and is—but, alas, not in the capitalist world. There is no intrusion upon privacy and no resentment at being addressed by a perfect stranger.

Also, and this you will love: we have made a complete tour of the crew’s quarters. The captain’s office is unusually large and open to anyone at any time except, I suppose, when he sleeps. He speaks English, badly, yet fluently. Standing beside him this morning were B. and F., who shyly did not address him, waiting, I suppose, for a sign of recognition from him. Out of a clear sky he suddenly asked: “Well, how do you like the bloody Bolsheviks?” (He knows, of course, they are traveling first class, and they both look pretty prosperous) but B. replied: “Since we might be classified among them must we be ‘bloody’, too?” He laughed at that, but opened up at once with a string of questions: How about the Sacramento trial—the strikes in California, the Imperial Valley, etc., etc.? He knew all about them, including of course the Gallup affair. I cannot possibly describe him, except that he is tall and wears no uniform—ever—just a long gray overcoat and a shabby gray cap. But his face—only a picture could give you an idea of it.

The various members of the crew, responsible ones, engineer, three mechanics, electrician, etc., have cabins all alone and very comfy and cosy ones they are. The other crew members, the “ordinary” sailors, deck hands, etc.

sleep two in a cabin. There is one sailor girl (possibly more, but we have seen only one as yet) whose job it is to keep the decks clean, with the assistance of two men, and you should see her in her blue flannel shirt and blue denim overalls, handling a heavy hose from which water spurts, her hair flying in the wind. Incidentally, her hair is either beautifully naturally curly or else nicely “permanented,” because water does not take the curl out of it, nor would she care, apparently; certainly she is more interested in getting her job done and well done than in her looks. She can well afford to be; however, she would be good-looking under any circumstances. She and her two helpers have lots of fun, chattering and laughing while they work. Last night a fuse blew out in the corridor outside the dining room. In a very few minutes a girl turned up with a step ladder under her arm and a roll of insulating tape (what we call “bicycle” tape), investigated the fuse, traced a wire along the ceiling, ripped it off, wrapped it in tape (singing to herself all the while), put the wire back again turned on the light and trotted off again with her ladder. Her official title is “electrician’s assistant.” Her uniform is a dark blue, neatly-fitting smock of artificial silk, and she speaks German a little, so I am hoping to know her better. She was too busy to talk last night. Our stewardess is a blond Russian girl, with the most friendly and kindly smile, but also exceedingly business-like. The

crew's dining room in the stern is quite as comfortable and spacious as any of the passenger recreation rooms. You should see their "Lenin Corner"—huge pictures of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Kalinin, hundreds of smaller pictures of "Udarniks," tractors, machines, etc., etc., and also several reproductions of famous paintings. There's a piano in the Lenin Corner and a dozen or more balalaikas and guitars.

Just now there was a burst of sound on the radio (one in every cabin) and out of it came the words "Leningrad—Smolny," followed by a greeting to the "Tovarishii" from the Proletarian Workers and Peasants of Russia to their comrades on the boat, followed by about ten minutes of news, none of which I could understand, alas, except that much of it must have been statistical, judging from the repetition of numbers—40 people did this or that, 50 something else, etc., also mention of Czechoslovakia, London, of the Art Exhibition in Leningrad, further mentions of Moscow, Baku, etc. Damn my stupidity in not knowing the language. The news broadcast was followed by music, still going on, and very good music it is—and not a phonograph record, but direct. Until this morning we have had phonograph records transmitted by radio to all parts of the boat, but from the Lenin Corner, where they have a phonograph and many fine records.

Monday—5 P. M.

Have just had a three-hour nap and tea, served each afternoon at 4 p.m., with dainty cakes, candies, etc. We entered the Kiel Canal about 12:30 a.m., and although I had been in bed and asleep for two hours or more, the stopping of the boat to let the lock fill woke me and I put on warm things and went up on deck and stayed there until four this morning, all by myself, looking out at Germany and the Hitlerlice. Of course, there were not many in evidence during those hours, but quite too many even then to contribute to my joy in life. They strut their stuff, click their heels and give the salute, even when they meet in a desolate wharf in the middle of the night. The pilot who came aboard at ten to take the boat into the canal was a strutter, too, started to give the salute when he came up to the bridge (I was on the bridge at that time full of curiosity as to the reception he would get from our captain). But the young pilot got no response whatever to his half finished salute, except a grunted "'n Abend. Wie lang wird es dauern?" ("Good evening, how long will it take?") Then he tried bawling orders, down tubes, etc. and the captain merely repeated them in his very quiet and brief way and in a few minutes the pilot was reduced to such a state of nervousness that he lighted one cigarette after another and puffed, threw it away after a puff and stood on one foot then the other—and I stood by and gloated over our old captain's perfect dignity and presence of mind. However, I must confess to adding a few tears to the wetness of the canal before four A. M., when I finally came back to bed and slept. By that time, of course, it was broad daylight, the sun shining, the storks flying from their nests

on farmhouses and barns, a nightingale singing his sweetest from a clump of trees on the bank, and at last, when I rose about 8:30, a lark—you remember how I loved them—singing his most ecstatic while he did his air dance in a meadow just outside. The canal is very narrow at one point—just wide enough for two boats our size or one very large one—and beautiful just now, wild flowers, green meadows, trees in blossom, the beautiful country and the lovely peaceful animals at pasture or lying asleep in the grass—it is incredible that a few miles away humans are being tortured.

Tonight three of the passengers have "called a meeting" of all the rest to be addressed by the captain and by any and all who may have anything of interest to say. Last night we had a picture show on deck—the enclosed portion of the deck—*Ivan the Terrible*—but while the passengers looked at the picture the crew danced on the other side of the same deck. They continued dancing when the picture was finished and the passengers came around to watch, a few joining and dancing with the crew members. I thought of you and tried to imagine you whirling about with the pretty stewardesses and the sailor girl and electrician's assistant, but, alas, you were not there.

Wednesday, June 5

The captain was busy with a meeting of the Smolny Soviet, so we did not have our meeting with him until yesterday afternoon. He gave a very good talk on the Soviet fleet—increased in number since Czarist times, but still inadequate, so they charter other boats for their exports, using their own for their imports alone.

There are six or seven children aboard and they like as a playground the upper deck and the captain's bridge—any one of us can go up to the bridge at any time and talk to the captain. Our formal friends would get a great kick out of seeing the officers stepping over and around a half dozen or so babies in order to fulfill their duties. None of the officers wear any insignia or uniforms, just plain dark blue suits and caps with hammer and sickle—no stars or bands of gilt to indicate their respective positions.

The Russians obviously know how to make glass—great, heavy, beveled windows of plate glass enclose the large deck on two sides and the mirrors are all of heavy beveled glass. An engineer on board (English) reports that the engine and steering apparatus, etc., are the final word in perfection. There must be a gyro on board—there is not the slightest roll although the sea had been choppy at times. The ship has a Diesel motor—oil burning, so we do not have to worry about any one suffering in the stokehold—and its rhythm is beautiful, as regular as the beating of a perfect running heart and almost musical. We are already getting into that multitude of tiny islands that dot the north Baltic—by this time tomorrow we will be in Leningrad.

I seem to have told you all about everything except food and I suppose you will be asked about that, so please inform any inquirers that it is not only plentiful but very well cooked, a

little too well for stomachs used to salads and green vegetables, as they use quantities of delicious butter on everything, including asparagus, cauliflower and peas. Delicious fish, wonderful "zakuschka," very good meat, fine goose dinner, two chicken dinners, tender and delicious, usually canned fruits—pears, cherries, plums—nothing to be desired as far as either quantity or quality are concerned. And, of course, among the "zakuschka" quantities of delicious caviar—the kind you can get in the States only at fabulous prices, the very best grade and quality. The breakfasts are huge. . .

I also forgot to tell you that the crew are divided into three shifts and conduct "socialist competition"—each crew trying to outdo the other in efficiency, etc. The results are splendid. One has only to mention a lack or a wish and immediately the word goes round and in a flash the desired repair or adjustment or article is at hand, cheerfully presented or done and with none of the servility that one sees on other boats, where it is impossible to get away from the consciousness that everything is being done with an eye to future tips.

Would you believe it—even on this boat there are two Babbitts, one English, one Lett-American; the Englishman bound and determined to be "the life of the party" with his jokes—mostly very bum jokes—the Lett-American strutting and boasting of being "self-made" but inasmuch as they hob-nob together most of the time, the rest of us can evade them.

Leningrad, Thursday Noon

Our last dinner on board Smolny, last night, was enjoyed by all. Several of the passengers made speeches and a collection was taken in lieu of the usual tips, to be "given to the crew for their Red Corner as a mark of appreciation for the loyal and cheerful service during the voyage." About \$60 was collected in English and American money. F. went in search of the captain to receive it and hand it over to the crew. The captain refused, but appointed a sailor, a regular deckhand type, marked by most of us because of an unusually intelligent face and dignified bearing, a young fellow not more than twenty-two or -three. He came into the dining room, thoroughly at ease, listened to the presentation speech made by an Englishman who speaks Russian and accepted the money, thanked us all and proceeded to make a little speech of his own. It was, translated, to the effect that since the Soviet Government pays all its employes and pays them so well that they need nothing special for the Lenin Corner, this fund so kindly given by the ship's guests will be turned over to the M.O.P.R. for the benefit of class-war prisoners in other countries. Told like this it sounds very matter-of-fact, but actually it was a most stirring scene and a lot of staid old Englishmen and young Americans wiped away tears. I do not mention the women—that is taken for granted. The speech was concluded by: "In the name of the Komsomols whom I represent on this ship and in the name of the Smolny Ship's Soviet of which I have the honor to be Secretary, I thank you."

"Our Great Mikado, Virtuous Man"

MIKE PELL

ONE day last summer, while I was sitting in a restaurant in Tokyo, three policemen entered. They gave curt orders to the waiter, who hurried over to me and requested that I move from my table at the window. At the same time other waiters hastily pulled down the shades of all windows which looked out on the railway track. His Imperial Majesty The Emperor was due to pass within a few hours and every window along the entire route from the Royal Detached Palace at Hayama to the Imperial Castle at Tokyo must be closed and shuttered and nobody dare peep through!

Some three thousand years ago, Amaterasu-no-mikami, the Heaven Shining Goddess, was born from the left eye of Izanagi, the Great Male Essence. Amaterasu, better known as the Sun Goddess, gave birth through her necklace. The latest crowned immortal descendant from her line is Hirohito, the present Mikado, who ushered in Showa, the Era of Great Peace, now prevalent in the sacred Eight Great Islands of Japan. Izanagi, the Supreme God, not satisfied with the rest of the world, created Dai Nihon Koku, the land of Great Japan, with magic drops from his jewelled spear, and then chose that land as the seat from which to rule the world. His descendants, endowed with the divine kami blood, take this mission very seriously and have already proceeded to spread the light in Formosa, Korea, Manchuria and over considerable stretches of China, Mongolia, Saghalin, the Philippines and many South Sea Islands. It is therefore well if we know something about Izanagi and his lively descendants.

What is remarkable is that the official historians of the Imperial Household did not fully reveal their own wonderful and ancient origin until quite recently. It was not, in fact, until about the middle of the last century, when the rising Nipponese bourgeoisie, with the help of Commodore Perry's cannon, overthrew the medieval Shogunate, that the lustrous and unbroken Imperial lineage was discovered. By a coincidence which was nothing short of divine, the immutability of the Throne which was then established proved to be the best possible justification for the new clique of rulers to remain in power for ever and ever.

Since that time, the Divine Origin and Eternity of the Imperial Household has been mercilessly drummed into the heads of every last coolie's child in every last corner of the Empire of the Rising Sun. The zealous minions of the Mikado, being notoriously lacking in humor, do not appreciate the joke in the historic fact that their colleagues under the Great (but erstwhile) Czar of All The Russians used also to go about instilling reverence and fear and undying fealty.

Today, for a Japanese subject not to believe

implicitly in the Divine Legend is extremely unhealthy. For merely entertaining scholarly doubts about the Three Sacred Jewels of the Sun Goddess, Dr. Tetsujiro Inouye of Tokyo University was penalized with social ostracism and the deprivation of many special privileges. (He was a member of the House of Peers.) Dr. Kunitake Kume of Waseda University, who committed the sacrilege of repeating certain spicy rumors about what the Empress Koten did in her bedroom some twelve hundred years ago, was also put on the spot by the Nipponese equivalents of our own ever-vigilant D. A. R. More recently, a Dr. Nitobe, authority on historical matters, had the effrontery to suggest that the Mikado was merely the highest organ of the State, whereas every schoolgirl has learnt that His Imperial Majesty is *high above* the State. For such a dastardly aspersion on the sublime status of the descendant of the Great Jimmu Tenno, Dr. Nitobe's books have been withdrawn and burnt, and he may consider himself lucky not to have had his bowels slashed open by a band of ronin. There are countless cases of schoolteachers dismissed and imprisoned for not bowing sufficiently low before the picture of the Wearer of The Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, or for alluding to Him with insufficient reverence. On the other hand, not a few brave teachers have risked their lives dashing into burning school buildings to rescue the portraits of members of the Imperial Household.

In Tokyo last Fall, a police lieutenant led the royal procession down the wrong street. The mistake gave rise to only momentary confusion, but it was considered such an insufferable affront to the Throne that the irrevocably disgraced lieutenant went home and slashed his throat, while his superiors in the police force all tendered their immediate resignation.

Japanese peasant and worker masses are more backward than Europeans. Large numbers of Japanese, Koreans and Manchurians still live under feudal and semi-feudal conditions and have not been allowed to liberate themselves from Confucianist, Buddhist and Shintoist dogma. The monks, priests and disciples of these sects and of the numerous other fantastic sects which flourish under the superstitious Flag of the Rising Sun, all devote their loudest hosannas to the living Personification of the Divine War Spirit. Besides the religious groups, there are the fiercely fascistic and militaristic credos of Bushido, Kodo, Yamato Damashii, etc., the followers of which must pledge unquestioning obedience and sacrifice for Tenno, the Heavenly King. Then there are the hundreds of patriotic organizations, all of whom take good care to have as the first point in their program eternal loyalty to the Imperial Household. Both the reactionary and

reformist trade unions, the social democrats, the liberals and all groups which hope to function legally must first of all affirm their fealty to the Laws of the Imperial Ancestors. It is noteworthy that the only groups which have consistently refused to bend the knee to this Mikado cult have been the revolutionary proletarian, peasant and intellectual organizations led by the Communists, who carry on their work of defiance under conditions of the most oppressive illegality.

Why is it that the rulers of Japan insist so ferociously upon the acceptance of their Mikado myth? Because in Japan the division of wealth is ferocious and merciless. Half a dozen family clans (the Mitsubishis, the Mitsuis, the Sumitomos, the Yasuda, etc.) own more than eighty percent of the total wealth of the Empire! This means that not only the peasantry and proletariat are pauperized, but the numerous lower middle-class has an awfully thin spread of the material things. Even the upper middle-class in Japan is held down tighter than in other bourgeois countries. As a result, there is a terrific and widespread hatred amongst all these classes against the small feudal oligarchy which through its trusts, monopolies, banks, insurance companies, etc., etc., has a stranglehold on the nation. These billionaire clans find refuge behind the elaborate flimflam of the Mikado and the Imperial Household. By blood and tradition and the stronger ties of common financial investments, they are inseparably wedded to the Imperial Household. And the Imperial clan is itself fabulously wealthy. Although the fact is kept dark, the Mikado personally owns one-seventh of all the forest lands in Japan. He is a heavy shareholder in the South Manchurian Railway, in the Nippon Yusen Kaisha and other steamship lines, in Korean, Formosan and Manchurian exploitation companies, in the Imperial Hotel of Tokyo, etc., etc.

In other bourgeois countries, where the spoils are divided up amongst fairly large groups of capitalists and where the middle class also gets a share, the rulers can count upon a considerable following whose allegiance is based on common material interests. The Japanese oligarchs exact allegiance on the basis of racial and nationalistic flimflam and fanaticism. Latterly, with the middle classes growing more and more restive (hence the mushroom growths of fascist organizations), the plutocrats are holding out promise of participation in the spoils from the forthcoming militaristic ventures (the invasion of Peoples' Mongolia, the Soviet Union, etc.).

But as long as the billionaire clansmen can continue to exact obedience to the Throne, they have nothing to worry about. Their noble and astute fathers arranged matters very well. When, after the overthrow of the Shogunate,

the growing class of merchants and craftsmen and industrialists clamored for a more representative government, those noblemen saw themselves compelled to grant a Constitution.

That document, finally promulgated in 1889 after insistent pressure by the masses, set up a Diet with a House of Representatives and House of Peers, and seemed to grant a fair amount of democratic liberties. As was subsequently discovered, the liberties are only seemingly granted, for every proviso in the Japanese Constitution is undermined with insidious jokers, leaving the Mikado and his

clique with autocratic and absolute powers. Even the official Japan Year Book issued by the Foreign Affairs Association admits (page 129, 1934 issue):

"The actual power of the Emperor at the present time is much greater than that of other constitutional monarchs."

That power, exercised in reality not by the Mikado alone but by the closely-knit clan of billionaire plutocrats, consists in complete control over the Army, the Navy, the enormous police forces, the schools, the press, the churches and the public treasury. No other

capitalist country, not even fascist Germany or Italy, is held under such strangulating control. In no other imperialist country has the home population been reduced to colonial status and sucked so completely dry.

All that power is constitutionally held by the Mikado. So long therefore as the Constitution is obeyed by the masses, so long, in devout Japanese terminology, as Tenshi, the Son of Heaven is reverentially followed by the soldiers, sailors and toilers of Japan, so long will the rapacious Nipponese warmongers remain safe. But only for so long.

Monte Alegre

GRETA CORSMAN

Under conditions of illegality and brutal police suppression, the Communist Party of Brazil is carrying the message of organization not only to industrial workers in the coastal cities but to coffee and sugar workers held in semi-serfdom on the plantations of the interior. As a result, the Party has been able to guide some remarkable spontaneous uprisings of these landless agricultural workers. Brazil is vast and the masses are largely illiterate, so they are doubly hard to reach. However, revolutionary literature finds an increasingly avid market, and, once bought, is passed from hand to hand, workers who can spell it out reading aloud to small groups of their illiterate fellows. The following notes were based upon information obtained on a visit to one of the "better" fazendas (plantations), a place exhibited to guests by an enthusiastic member of the bourgeoisie in a district where conditions were unusually good.—THE EDITORS.

TERRA ROXA—red earth of Brazil—deep, fertile, abundant. You see it only where the road cuts through; all else is grey-green sugar-cane, harsh but lovely, a new crop, knee-deep, lifting and falling under the wind. To the horizon, it belongs to the Companhia Assucareira Monte Alegre.

The company owns, too, the trim, planted forests of eucalyptus trees, all grace, with their tall trunks and delicate leaves always stirring. They grow with extraordinary speed, furnish excellent fuel for the furnaces in the refinery. A world of living beauty here, forest and cane; at its center the refinery, glutton that will eat it all. A world of human misery, too—the workers; another, greater glutton, the company. As fields and forests feed cane and wood into the refinery, so do fields, forests and refinery, well-paid bosses and destitute workers, feed profits into the company.

The company owns the refinery, owns the high, clean brick walls, the cylinders for cutting cane, the furnaces, the vats, the crystal-lizers, the giant sieves, the turbines. The

company owns the miniature railway that serves the refinery with cane in the cutting season and carries off bags of sugar: first quality, second, third, fourth. The company owns the empty bags piled ready, with meticulous care, on clean shelves in a vast, airy room. The company owns the machine shop, the repair shop, the casting room where a dozen men, black and white and deep Brazilian brown, are pouring parts—liquid metal into molded sand. (One tall youth looks up out of his good eye; the other is gone. "There is no danger," says the foreman. "If you pour carefully it does not spatter").

The company owns the laboratory where a white-coated boy is busy with pestle and mortar and where trained chemists, when they have finished their morning coffee, will come to devise new methods of saving fertilizer, saving money. The company owns the store. The *colono*, who works in the fields, may buy in the store, on credit, rice, salt, onions, dried meat; but how much he may buy depends upon the value of the cane he has planted. Cane grows. More sun, more rain, more days of growing, more credit. The children of the *colono*, however hungry, must wait upon the cane. When the countryside was planted to coffee, the *colono* might have his rows of corn and *feijao* (brown beans) between the rows of coffee trees. That helped a bit. The custom persisted when the culture changed to sugar, but agricultural experts pointed out that corn grew fast and stole both sun and mineral values from the growing cane. Now the *colono* has only a minute patch of the poorest land on which to grow *feijao*.

The company owns the school, imposing and white. Down hill from the school and from the charming walled gardens and freshly painted homes of the directing and technical staff, are rows of plastered brick, dingy, unspeakably sordid, pierced by dark holes—alternating doors and windows. Here are the homes of the *colonos*. They fall heavily upon the sight. Their presence wipes the freshness from the morning. From them

exudes a stench, not so much of active filth—food is too scarce that it should be allowed to rot. The stench is one of years of unrelieved "subsistence levels." Down hill from the homes of the *colonos* are the privies. Down hill from the privies is the spring, water coming steadily but not very fast from a pipe driven into the hill. Monte Alegre! The spring serves hundreds of families, from morning to night there is a group of women and children waiting there, waiting for the buckets and old kerosene tins, one after another, to fill. Does the company own the *colonos*?

They do not leave for other *fazendas*. This is life, here on Monte Alegre: work in the fields, work on the railroad, work for a favored few in the mill, then home to the teeming rows of brick, white-washed once (how long ago?) and to the unvarying meals, rice and *feijao*, rice and *feijao*, with a little dried meat, perhaps, on Sunday. Home, heavy with fatigue, crusted with earth and sweat, to a little talk at the door of the house or at the single window that looks blankly out on the common street. The street of a *fazenda* is silent, dusty, and no one passes unless it be a child fetching water, a man on his way from work, a pig rooting, ever hopeful, in the dirt that yields so little, an old woman who has walked miles from the city to beg. She may be a leper, she may be clean. She is very bent and ragged. There are people who come to beg at the door of a *colono's* house. He has little; they have nothing. The thought of them is between him and the world. And always he reaches the year's end without money. Aching toil in the fields every day, with wife and children helping in the cutting season; for food, rice and *feijao*; clothes earth-colored, worn and faded with many washings and, after his wife had pounded them clean, kneeling with the other women beside the stream, no sooner worn to work than they are earthy again; only this from life and yet the debt keeps pace relentlessly with the stipend due him for his harvest. He stays

on the *fazenda* five years, ten years, twenty, thirty, forty. Dull years, all hard, alike, under the beating sun, in a meager community of small houses unrepaired, pervaded by the smell of unwashed bodies, ringed round by miles of growing cane.

One thing he has: The air is heavy in the crowded room and his limbs and hers are spent with work, but the *colono* has his woman. In the dark he does not see her sunken cheeks nor the black stumps of teeth and the gaps, red-gummed, that mar the smile of the Brazilian girl before she is out of her twenties. He knows a body alive with love. He has his moment; she has hers. Children come fast on Monte Alegre.

They are born into the hands of a bent little Italian midwife who came to the *fazenda* thirty-eight years ago. When her husband, a *colono*, died he left her with ten children. At first it was very hard but she succeeded in raising eight of them, a good record for Monte Alegre, and now they are grown, it is easier. All the women come to her. She has learned a little here, a little there, sometimes the company doctor gives her advice. She expects twenty cases in the next four months. She is far too wise to hazard a guess as to how many of the babies will live and grow to cut cane on Monte Alegre. She cannot read, nor if she could would she have time or take trouble to find in the records of the municipality which includes the *fazenda* the figures for 1932: population about 81,000; still-births 188, live births 1831, deaths 1139 of which 288 were infant deaths. Supposing the figures to be complete and the chances no worse on Monte Alegre than in the town with its rows of bourgeois homes, no worse than on the small farms, worked by the owner with a helper or two; of the twenty women now big with child, at least one, probably more than one, will have nothing to show for her carrying and bearing but a tiny body for which she must somehow buy a coffin. Before the year is out three more mothers will watch over wailing babies, fight to save them, give up hope. Afterwards they will arrange small desolate funerals. This we might expect if the chances were no worse than in the town, but there is every reason to think they are much worse. The first year of life on Monte Alegre is a perilous one. How many of the twenty women will die in childbirth, how many carry the wounds of unskillful delivery, we cannot guess. The midwife is thin. Her house is tidy. Her eyes are fathomless.

The company watches and waits. It counts the children who survive, and reckons them all in determining how much a *colono* can be expected to plant, tend, cut. Women and children go to the fields at the season when work is heavy. To be sure there is school. At eight years every child must go to school and must continue until he learns to read and write unless that takes more than four years as it frequently does. But he is not lost to work; there are two sessions. If his school is in the afternoon he can work

from dawn to mid-day in the cane, if in the morning he can be in the fields by one.

The company has a doctor who comes once a week from town—medical service free, a modern gesture. No doubt he is an excellent man. His name rolls convincingly from the tongue and the company would hardly forget its dignity so far as to engage a mediocre physician. But the mother in the corner house shakes her head. Her daughter, twenty, sits in the kitchen doorway, blank eyes of misery in a face that does not change. The son is worse—hardly to be looked upon. He is slumped forward in his chair—alive, yes, for he moves just perceptibly from time to time, but flies are crawling on his bare swollen feet, on his hands, on his face.

"How long has he been that way?" "It began ten years ago; keeps getting worse." "And before? Ten years ago?" "He worked." It is a cry, bitter and loud. She would have you know she bore a man. "The doctor is treating him?" "The doctor is very dear." "Free, I thought." "Yes, free at the office." "The doctor costs ten milreis at the house."

The girl sitting in the doorway can cross the room with help; she cannot walk even a few hundred yards down the road to the office, nor can her brother who does not brush the flies from his face. Ten milreis are ten milreis. Does the doctor, once a week, see through brick walls to those who are too much in need of him to reach the office, wait in line?

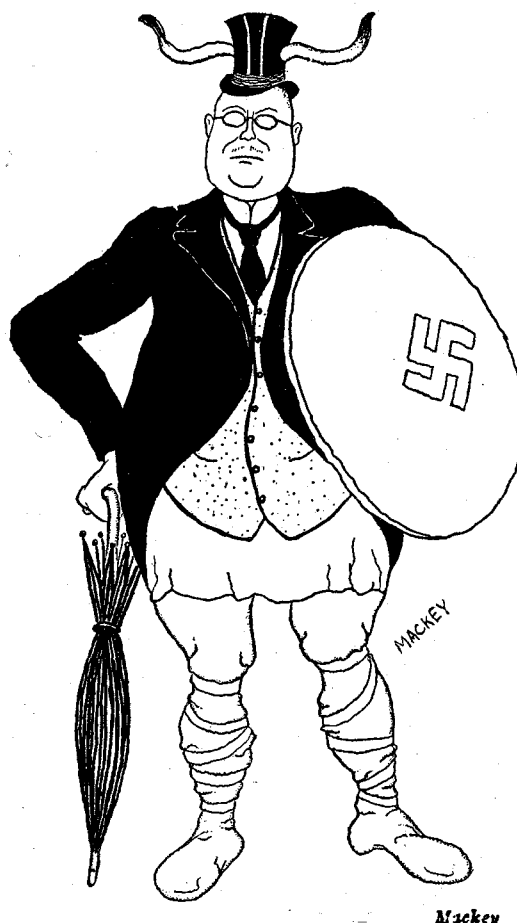
And what of those who see him? He is treating the young Negro girl who moans on her bed in the house next the corner; is treating her small, scrawny brother with the

awful bloodshot film spreading to cover one eye, with the sagging lid—is it trachoma? The mother's face is bewildered, unutterably kind, and her arms are knotted with fierce muscles—the crumbling brick floor is freshly scrubbed. Her mother stands beside her.

"We've been here, mother and daughter, a long while now. You try and try. But there's always sickness. If it isn't one it's another. The doctor doesn't seem to help much. I guess it's in the air here at Monte Alegre." A common thought, that. It is echoed at the house a little down the row, where you stop next. The woman is young, white, emaciated, her cheek-bones sharp under the skin. Three babies, all under four years old, are tossing and whimpering with fever on the two beds that fill the little room. "The air here, or maybe the water. The children are bad today. I don't know what to do."

One household only in the first random four you visit is well and sound—father a mechanic in the refinery, still very young and straight with determined eyes, only five years on the *fazenda*; mother apparently not out of her teens, alert, vigorous; two youngsters with rounded sturdy limbs. "Your children look well." She doesn't thank the doctor. "Thank God," she says, "they are still well." These are the words that come, with a sharp sigh, from those rare Brazilian working-class mothers whose children's health you can praise. The words are prayer (the Church's hold is strong), but more than prayer they are premonition and a mother's tigerish wish to save her young. She speaks grimly, briefly, of the struggle for food, no green vegetables, no fruit. Two hens are pecking just inside the door. "I give the children eggs when we have any. Milk? The milkman comes every day—over there." She tosses her head toward the pleasant homes of the director's staff. . . . "Of course, if there was money to buy milk. . . ." Again the sharp sigh, watchful, protective, and one fierce glance. The doctor seems quite remote.

Terra roxa—red earth of Brazil—sugar-cane lifting in waves, lovely as an ocean, to wind and sun. In that sunny ocean, an island, Monte Alegre, where class lines are drawn with cold distinctness; where the directing staff, incisive, imperturbable, plans ample housing for machines, supplies, but serves the company with far too much integrity to squander money on workers' homes, on sanitation; where rates for cutting cane are pared with skill; where the advantages of new techniques are nicely calculated and misery is shut into little houses and forgotten. The cane rises higher and higher each day, superb with the thrust of rich Brazilian soil; men, women and children, families upon families, generations upon generations, each in intimate sight of all and all alike, are being pressed, crushed, ground, slowly and inexorably down into that soil. How long? Some day the Companhia As-sucareira Monte Alegre will reap a harvest that is not cane.



Correspondence

"Peace Policies of Moscow"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In your editorial "The Peace Policies of Moscow" in the August 13 issue you make several statements about which I should appreciate further clarification. You say, for example

The basis of the solution has been a new application of the old technique of "divide and conquer" and the balance of power.

Further along, you say, too

When war comes Moscow will be ready. And in war's bloody aftermath of social and economic collapse, the Comintern, which has necessarily been quiescent in the now vanishing epoch of capitalistic stability, will face new opportunities and new tasks.

I am not clear on these two points. Does Moscow use the old imperialistic device of "divide and conquer"? And furthermore, I had not been aware the Comintern had been "quiescent" in the "now vanishing epoch of capitalistic stability." What about that? Has the Comintern been quiescent since the last Congress? That's what I have heard enemies of the Soviet Union say, but I did not expect to find the statement in THE NEW MASSES.

Nashua, N. H.

LAWRENCE G. THOMPSON.

Editorial Comment

No discussion of war is adequate that does not take into account the position of the Soviet Union and its revolutionary peace policy. The Soviet Union, needing time to complete the work of socialist construction, has gained a respite from inevitable capitalist attack by taking advantage of imperialist rivalries. This need of the Soviet Union to maintain itself in the midst of an imperialist world, to ward off a constantly increasing war threat, and to hold up a revolutionary example for the world's masses, has been its major foreign policy problem ever since the October Revolution. Lenin put it this way, in speaking of an "agreement" he reached with the French against the Germans in 1918:

And despite all the wrathful howling of the Anglo-French and American imperialism, despite all the calumnies they have showered upon us, despite all the millions spent for bribing the right Socialist-Revolutionary, Menshevik and other social-patriotic newspapers, *I would not hesitate a single second to come to the same kind of an "agreement" with the German imperialist robbers, should an attack upon Russia by Anglo-French troops demand it.*

To term this policy "diplomatic maneuvering" or that of "supporting the weaker imperialism against the stronger"—as did our editorial last week—is wrong, since it is open to misinterpretation.

Taking advantage, in the interests of Socialism, of existing contradictions between imperialist powers is something altogether different from supporting either rival. One might as easily accuse Lenin of "supporting" Germany or the allied powers when he took advantage of the plight of first one and then the other in order to gain the time needed for the consolidation of the Bolshevik revolution. Moreover, the question is far deeper than that of "diplomatic maneuvering." Such a characterization leaves out of account the fact that every government has been restrained in its hostility toward the Soviet Union because of the support of its own workers for the Workers' Republic. Nor may one overlook the fact, also, that the Soviet peace policy has redounded to the benefit of every toiler in the world by postponing war, allowing further time for the proletarian movements to grow internationally and thus be in far better shape to cope with the question of imperialist war when it does finally break out.

The basis of this policy is not a "new application of the old technique of 'divide and conquer' and the 'balance of power.'" Such terminology is reminiscent of the weary Trotskyite libel of "red imperialism." The U.S.S.R., the only anti-imperialist power in the world, acts as it does because it is impelled, by its proletarian foreign policy, by its revolutionary peace program, to seek out every means of maintaining peace. It seeks peace as logically, as inevitably, as the imperialist powers seek war, driven by the lash of economic circumstance—by the stress of their competitive imperialism. The Soviet peace policy is as inherent in its make-up as is the inevitable war policy of all the imperialist states driven frantic by the need for markets to maintain their capitalist structure.

The Comintern, in this entire period, has never, as Trotsky would have it, lain "quiescent." On the contrary, it has guided the epochal successes of the heroic Chinese Revolution to a pass where more than 70,000,000 Chinese are today organized in Soviets. It has been a unifying factor in the attempt to coalesce the world proletariat into a united front against fascism and war. Its record is there for anyone with eyes that will see, in France, in underground Germany, Spain, Austria. The constituent parties of the Comintern have been aware of these facts and understand that were it not for the Soviet peace policy all their efforts to organize the proletarians of their land would have been aborted by the declaration of war. Hence, they have been doubly impelled to bend all their energies to the task of safeguarding the first victorious socialist revolution as a major endeavor in their program of stimulating the revolutionary movements in their lands. They know the central political slogan of the Comintern today is "Soviet power!"—and they all strive, in their multitudinous every day activities, to achieve this ultimate goal.—THE EDITORS.

A Reminder for Gold

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In the issue of July 30, I was enjoying the excellent report of the Writers' Congress—"The Writers Meet in Paris," by Michael Gold—when I came upon these words in reference to the Trotskyite, Magdalene Paz, "this fat, flabby fool with the marcelled hair delivered a slanderous speech, etc."

I have never seen Mr. Gold nor his likeness. For all I know he is an Apollo. But if he chanced to be bald, astigmatic and pot-bellied it would not be either courteous or relevant to mention it in print when discussing his views.

The folly of Magdalene Paz's statements against the Soviet Union stands. It is not heightened by uncomplimentary comments on her appearance.

Mr. Gold should be reminded that in the better world which he is striving to bring about good taste and good manners will have their place.

Nassau Point, L. I.

FLORENCE F. FOSTER.

And a Rejoinder

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Magdalene Paz, whom I met in New York eight years ago, played a particularly dirty trick on me at the Writers' Congress in Paris. I met her in the lobby there one night. I hadn't recognized her, but she came up and introduced herself. That was all that passed between us; judge my surprise then, when the next day she told the Committee in charge of the Congress that I had given her permission to substitute for me on the program that night!

She had been assigned to speak the next afternoon, at a smaller session. But she wanted the big hall, when 3,000 to 4,000 people would be present to bring in her clique, and make a demonstration against the Soviet Union. And she lied

shamelessly, and used my name in her little political stunt; as if I would ever help an enemy of the Soviet Union!

I didn't mention this episode in my original article, but it accounts for my disgust with the lady. Aren't we supposed to have any personal feelings in the class war?

MICHAEL GOLD.

Letters in Brief

Clifton Amsbury of San Francisco writes us to say that at last THE NEW MASSES is "vindicating its existence." He praises the recent article on Middle Ground Writers and the reviews of *Young Joseph* and *Redder Than the Rose*, but is certain that Pacific Weekly is a better magazine.

Willianna Burroughs draws attention to the fact that the Negro real-estate broker who opened Harlem to Negro occupation was Phillip, not James, Payton. She stresses the point that Negro real-estate men promised owners that they could get higher rent if they turned apartments over to Negroes.

The strike of American Mercury office employees has been called off, the Office Workers' Union writes. The boycott of the magazine will be continued.

Clyde Fisher of Phoenix, Arizona, congratulates us on the July 23 issue and wants Joshua Kunitz to write some articles containing information on the military strength and technical equipment of the Red Army.

J. B. McNamara, veteran political prisoner confined at San Quentin, is being deprived of the things he wants to read and forced to read such trash as *Wild West Stories*, E. Coleman of San Francisco writes. He asks that protests be sent the warden of the prison.

Florence Meyer, San Francisco nurse, writes to make her protest against the use of "filthy language" by proletarian writers. Nelson Algren's story, *A Lumpen*, comes in for strong condemnation on this score and she says that her protest is that of thousands of other women.

Blake Clark of the University of Hawaii does not think William Gropper should draw cartoons of Japan's emperor. He makes the point that attacks on the Mikado only give the Japanese militarists something with which to arouse the masses.

William Randolph Hearst was found guilty of being a fascist and a war-monger at a mass trial conducted by the San Francisco League Against War and Fascism, Addison Keller, secretary, writes. The sentence was a boycott of Hearst press and advertisers.

Michael Gold's assertion that the French People's Front will never be shaken until there is a "complete liquidation of fascism" is questioned in a letter from Phillip David. David points out that the liquidation of fascism is only part of the task and that the united front will carry on until a socialist state has been established.

Joseph Zukin writes to suggest that persons who have visited the Soviet Union make every effort to publish their observations to counteract the slanders in the Hearst press.

Stephen Carey, San Pedro, California, writes to ask Joshua Kunitz to pay particular attention to the Soviet labor organizations among longshoremen and marine workers. He wants an article on living and working conditions and on the substitutes for the profit motive among Russian workers.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

From the Literature Without Uniforms

THE LAND OF SHVAMBRANIA, by Leo Kassil. Translated by Sylvia Glass and Norbert Guterman. The Viking Press. \$2.

THE literature that is said to be "in uniform" refuses to show much sign of military drill. Perhaps it is on a long furlough. Certainly, as Soviet book after book appears, it is chiefly such un-military virtues as tenderness, humanity, satire, imagination, breadth and so on that are involved. Judging only from the meager representation of the books in English translation, the variety, the appetite for experiment, the joyous sense of vital identity with a living world that they display makes the un-uniformed literatures of the unproletarian-dictated nations look rather wan and elderly.

What will Max Eastman and his troop of scouts, determined to find here enemies of the imagination in full regimental regalia, make of the *Land of Shvambrania*, the novel with a map and a coat of arms, this surprising and diverting and enlightening history of the Continent of The Great Tooth? True, it ends on a moral, but the moral is not that life is real and earnest in the pattern of a new Puritanism, but that Soviet reality is richer in opportunities held out to adventurous mind and spirit than fantasy and is clamorous with invitation. And, moreover, it points that moral not with precepts, but with the actual events of a city in post-revolutionary transformation.

Under capitalism the need of a refugee world grows daily as its sapped and shaken economic structure becomes more slovenly, run down and unlivable. In Italy, the Shvambrania is the Ancient Roman Empire; in Germany, the Shvambrania is the still more ancient Arya-Varta; and not children alone but adults are taken into them. In America, an official Shvambrania has not yet been devised but old Cinderella Shvambranas, Hollywood great-love Shvambranas, rugged-individualism Shvambranas, Huey Long's Kingdom-of-Kings Shvambrania, Macfadden's big-muscle and smooth-thigh Shvambrania, the technocratic Shvambrania of super-engineers, the modest pink Shvambrania of unbiased and mannerly liberals, the New Deal Shvambrania and others, all gyre and gimble in the wabe.

Kassil's Shvambrania was made by and for children. Its makers were two children in a petit-bourgeois household. It was constructed to provide a refuge from the inequalities and unreason of the adult world and it grew in proportion to the growth of the lunacies of that world. Its

era was the time immediately before and during the World War. Its building materials were the fantasies contained in their reading and the fantasies of commercial advertising. Most of its nomenclature—an elaborate one since a whole continent and a whole set of social institutions had to be named—was made up of trade marks. These, since the father was a doctor, were chiefly medical. The heroine and also the first woman of Shvambrania, for example, was the lovely and virtuous Cascara Sagranda. At first Shvambrania included the whole continent but in order to provide conquests an enemy had to be given a little space. For the enemy a further space, called Captivity, was provided. Shvambrania was well provided in other ways with the appurtenances of the adult world, a nobility and useless occupations.

The "secrets" of Shvambrania, maps, plans, lists and so on, were kept hidden from the beginning in the fashion of all government archives. But Shvambrania itself in its expansion could not be kept completely out of sight.

It was far too exciting a land for the few allowed to visit it, not to spread traveler's stories.

In time the realities of the revolutionary world proved so much more challenging to the imagination and to the growing minds of the creators of Shvambrania that they took

longer and longer absences from their realm. In the public school that had formerly been a private school, with the new companions from the working class from whom they had formerly been kept aloof, they engaged in activities far more absorbing than the once thrilling game of Shvambrania. And the motives for preserving the "secrets" changed from pride to diffidence.

Shvambrania came to an end when, by a train of circumstances too full and lively to be crammed into a synopsis, the "secrets" of Shvambrania fell into the hands of the Cheka. The two lords of Shvambrania were summoned to a hearing. Sheepishly they explained the origins and history of the Continent of The Great Tooth. Laughter, never supposed to be heard within the grim walls of the Cheka offices, resounded. But the examiner did more than dismiss the two Shvambrans with indulgent adult laughter. He invited them to give to the world of reality the ardor and imagination they had spent upon Shvambrania. Later when the two Shvambrans met, one an engineer playing a role in the construction of Soviet economy and the other a writer engaged in what Stalin has called engineering of the soul, they memorialized their abandoned play realm with a saying of Lenin's, ignored by those who have an abiding and inimical faith in the "crass materialism" of Communism: "And if anyone should say what has all this to do with us? We do not need any illusions or deceptions to maintain our enthusiasm. This is our great advantage. But

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that does not mean that we have no need of dreams at all."

Kassil's achievement is a new thing in literature. It should be for this generation what the vaguer and sadder *Crock of Gold* was to an earlier generation although its effect will be different, a stimulus where the *Crock of Gold* was an anodyne. There are many quite magical qualities in it. It has a wit that is fragrant because its distilling agent is love of life rather than the anger at life that has distilled the moody, accusing ironies of recent literature under capitalism. Its graceful and leaping imagination is something that could be looked for only in a society where the human spirit may feel at home and free.

But the most remarkable characteristic of this remarkable book is that it preserves the interdependence of fantasy with reality, in a way that psychologists who insist upon it have been helpless to achieve. And so this light-hearted and spontaneous book becomes profoundly enlightening. The imaginative part is never separated from the reality that begets it. Shvambrania becomes the mirror, the witness, the intuitive criticism of the world it is a refuge from. Shvambrania is not allowed to evaporate off from reality. It remains within the actualities from which it springs and to which it returns. Far from dimming the fantasy, the presence of reality strengthens it, gives it its peculiar life.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Criticism with an Ax

SOVIET RUSSIAN LITERATURE, by
Gleb Struve. George Routledge & Sons.

THE two most ambitious attempts at familiarizing the English reader with Soviet literature have been not merely ineffective but almost totally worthless. Last year it was Reavey and Slonim's anthology *Soviet Literature*—a hodge-podge of ill-chosen excerpts, pitifully translated (with the exception of Alec Brown's two brief renderings), which seem to have had for its immediate objective (so distorting was the perspective!) to frighten the reader away from Soviet literature and all things Soviet. At the time at least one critic, Prince Mirsky's authoritative voice rose, explaining the reasons for this maliciously loaded book. Mirsky exposed Slonim, "an active political emigré, that is to say, an enemy of the Soviet Union," and, one may add, one with no other particular purpose in life than to slander at all times and places the dictatorship of the proletariat. As for Reavey, Mirsky proved that his defects sprang "from the *bona fide* socialism of an ambitious but not over-talented undergraduate" whose intentions were not consciously hostile.

This year a "Lecturer in Russian Literature at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London" has taken the floor. His name is Gleb Struve and, according to his publishers, his *Soviet Russian Literature* is "the first comprehensive study of Soviet literature to appear in English." Less subtle than Slonim who at least was "an experienced politician" and performed "his work in such a way that his real aims could not be detected by the average reader," Prof. Struve enters ax in hand and hews his way into the Soviet forest neither concealing his weapon nor making excuses for its bluntness. This time a less-than-average reader can detect the anti-Soviet, anti-proletarian attitude. The introduction of this "comprehensive study" contains the following clear-cut thesis: "I wanted to show, not what literature in Soviet Russia was *unable* to accomplish because of being

stified and 'bureaucratized' (which it, no doubt, is) but rather what it has *achieved in spite of* all the efforts at bureaucratization" (italics are Struve's). Later on, this leit-motif recurs throughout the 270 pages—for instance, "Literature in Soviet Russia, like everything else, is planned, it is artificially reared and looked after, it cannot develop free and untrammelled," etc. In other words, Struve spares no genuflections to Max Eastman's pronouncements anent esthetic regimentation or to Trotsky's unfulfilled prophecy on the impossibility of a proletarian culture. But Struve *must* write a book—after all, he must try to immortalize his name (Struve is somewhat immortal already), to earn some royalties, and perhaps (who knows?) get a comfortable Chair at the University of London. So Struve chirps from his lecturer's platform: "Let us assume for a moment that there is such a thing as Soviet literature," and half-frightened at his daring assumption, he begins to meditate, yes, to think—what are the outstanding values in Soviet Russian literature? Where, oh where, am I going to find those esthetic values so sacred to my university colleagues and my sires? Alas, where are the Dostoievskys of yesteryear, where the tenants of the ivory tower, where the cobwebbed cosmicists, where the anthroposophic disciples of Rudolf Steiner—in brief, where is Mme. Hippisus run to? All have deserted, left no address and Struve is distressed. But he must march on, at any cost, despite the thorns. He may still find some symbolist sediments, some stagnant Beauty. Aha, here's Kaverin, Veniamin Kaverin himself, the youngest of the Serapions. Slonim, too, played his Kaverin, the Kaverin Mirsky classified as "a minor writer." Struve smiles supernally: "an individualist, counter-revolutionary note is distinctly sounded in this work (Kaverin's *The Trouble Maker*) which contains an open protest against restrictions on creative freedom, against all political chaperoning of literature. . . . Kaverin is one of the most interesting figures in present-day Russian literature." Then Struve expresses

his admiration for Romanov because the author of *Without Cherry Blossom* boldly "shows the new type of young men, mostly students, who have discarded all romantic notions of love. . . . Next to his new Sannine, Romanov shows women who, though craving for something different, show a highly developed erotic sensibility and easily succumb to 'temptations.'" Perhaps for similar reasons Struve broadcasts his love for Nikitin's *Crime of Kirik Rudenko*, "a sombre-colored picture of the *moeurs* of the Young Communist League: drunken debauchery, rape and murder form an essential part." Struve regrets, however, that Zoshchenko "expresses himself in the peculiar jargon of a semi-educated man with a strong admixture of the specific Soviet journalese which is rapidly undating and spoiling the Russian language." Struve simply can't stand Soviet vulgarity and he chuckles with delight on discovering that in *The Restored Youth* Zoshchenko "was pulling the legs . . . of some of the most eminent Soviet scientists."

Any form of wavering, be it in the ideological development of Fedin or of Leonov, or in the satirical work of Olesha (the only writer honored with a full chapter in the book precisely because of his early deviations and deeply-rooted individualism), is fully noted and commented by this objective and impartial historian of literature. So that when the moment comes for a general conclusion on the Soviet novel, he declares: "To sum up: Trotsky was right in thinking that the Soviet government would be unable to create a special proletarian literature."

On glancing over the Soviet drama, Struve dares say "yes" and dares say "no." "The theatrical technique has progressed with gigantic strides. But the weak spot of the post-revolutionary theatre is its lack of good dramatic literature. . . . Three or four years later (i.e. three or four years after 1927) Cecil de Mille was still asking Zamyatin, 'Where are your new plays?' and Zamyatin had to agree with him that there were none. In 1933 the lack of good new plays was still the keynote of Soviet Russian dramatic criticism." But why cannot Struve find plays? Because when he comes across *Yegor Bulychev and Others* (correctly characterized by Mirsky as "Gorki's highest achievement and the highest achievement of Soviet literature") he dismisses it in six inane lines: "variations on one of Gorki's favorite themes—the decadence of the Russian bourgeoisie. Like his latest novels these plays (*Yegor Bulychev and Others* and *Dostigaev and Others*) are essentially retrospective in character." And that's that! For, after all, "is not the story of the Soviet theatre, just as of Soviet literature, and even broader—of the Soviet Union itself—a story of the incessant struggle between the claims of life and the encroachments of the cut-and-dried doctrine, in which life gradually gains ground?"

There is a phrase that distresses Prof. Struve beyond measure—that phrase is Socialist Realism. Time and again, he whim-

pers—Socialist Realism, “whatever that may mean.” The professor refuses to accept a classification that has not been buried in either the heavy indexes of the British Museum or in his own rusty academic files. Previously Struve was shocked at the idea of having playwrights “master more thoroughly ‘the victorious doctrine of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin’,” adding politely, “whether this recipe would produce good dramas, one may be allowed to doubt.” Now, as for this business of Socialist Realism—what is it all about? Where does it come from? The Pioneers, the Y.C.L.-ers, the Communists, the Comintern? No, no—it comes from Stalin himself. “The catchword of Socialist Realism was coined by Stalin and it was he who formulated the role of Soviet writers as ‘the engineers of human souls’.” But what right has Stalin to do that? “The unique character of this literary method is not an invention of the pan-Soviet Writers’ Union, but has been dictated to it by the political leader of the country, a man who has not and never had anything to do with literature.” The toga-ed Struve gradually succumbs to slander. Any one who has read, for instance, Stalin’s debate with H. G. Wells easily recognizes the calibre of mind the “political leader” represents. In fact, one is perfectly justified in believing that he who “never had anything to do with literature” can teach Prof. Struve a thing or two about belles lettres—the trouble perhaps is that Stalin seems to be so busy with other than belletristic problems! But all this is quite beside the point. The truth of the matter is that Socialist Realism was born and is growing out of new

social conditions in the Soviet Union. It was not exactly discovered by Stalin, nor, as Struve would have preferred it, did it come from a writer’s discussion the night of April 18 at the Rotonde, etc., but rather from a more thorough mastering of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin (!), from the writer’s more direct contact with factories and farms, from the fruitful cooperative work of the masses, creating a new social order, dignifying the existence of man. To Struve the professor, the history of literature is but a series of labels—to the writers and workers of the Soviet Union it is something that lives and develops and changes with the ever growing needs and luxuries of socialist life.

It is from the very conflicts that Struve so clumsily and maliciously pointed out—from the infantile deviations of revisionists, from the vulgarizers, from the left-overs of bourgeois individualistic norms—that one is able to witness dialectical gropings and shapings which indicate abundant life. Struve is unfair to Ehrenburg, to Olesha, to Alexey Tolstoy, etc., in that he analyzed them in the past, at one particular moment of their ideological development and, on the other hand, minimized or completely ignored the work of Avdeyenko, Sobolev, Ilyenkov, etc., simply because they are “uncouth” proletarian writers. Because they are, in fact, the writers that Trotsky did not and could not take into account when formulating his bankrupt prophecy on proletarian literature. Because these writers are showing the tottering bourgeois world the culture of the future and the inevitable victory of the proletariat of the world.

ANGEL FLORES.

For Young Revolutionists

COMRADES FOR THE CHARTER, by Geoffrey Trease. International Publishers. 85 cents.

EDDIE AND THE GIPSY, by Alex Wedding. International Publishers. 85 cents.

MARTIN’S ANNUAL. Edited by Joan Beauchamp. International Publishers. All Illustrated. \$1.

SEVERAL years ago proletarian fiction, poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, music, the dance, etc., were scarcely in existence. Today they are in a number of cases, dominant in their fields. The revolutionary movement is fairly in possession of the heights on the cultural front. To carry on the last metaphor, there was one important position on this front still to be won, and the news of this review is that the capture is imminent. For the victory we will be indebted to an English and a German writer, for of the three books listed here, two are importations and the third a translation.

No book by Geoffrey Trease or Alex Wedding will ever be picked by a Junior League Guild or awarded a Newberry medal. But they are certain to win a more satisfactory reward—to be counted among the foun-

ders of proletarian children’s literature outside of Russia, and probably to be named as inspirers in the reminiscences of the next generation of revolutionary leaders.

The gifts of these two superb children’s writers differ widely from each other. Trease draws his subjects from history, making use of the class struggle for dramatic conflict and giving such a rendering of events as to make that history as fresh as today, as indeed it is, for the struggles of today are continuations of the class struggle through history. This he does through a mastery of swift-paced narrative rarely equalled in its field.

Wedding, on the other hand, takes his subject from contemporary life. While there is no lack of action in the book its chief appeal is through warm and for the most part sympathetic and humorous characterization. Life is joyous in spite of its brutalities; it is a fight, but one in which good humor is a valuable weapon.

Comrades for the Charter is a proletarian epic of the Chartist movement. It is given in the terms of its adventure, its seething struggle, its pageantry of bonfires, gather-

ings in the hills, conspiracy and fight; and this, in turn, in a way that never slips from the child’s eye to the man’s. In this dramatized but accurate presentation, the Chartist story is so well told, indeed, that we would even go so far as to recommend it as collateral reading to the researches of Marx and Engels into the industrial revolution and the conditions of the working class in England, the role of the pre-scientific socialists and of the primitive Communists who rose with the Chartist tide. Revolutionary fires are not extinguished. When the Chartist movement was suppressed the Chartist “criminals” were deported to the penal colonies in Australia. But there they helped to build up trade-union strength in the Commonwealth.

Eddie, of *Eddie and the Gipsy*, is a proletarian child. In a simple and natural way he is shown taking on the workers’ psychology, till even in his games, there is a reflection of the class struggle. Eddie’s father having lost his job, Eddie must join the ranks of the breadwinners. He gets work as a newsboy. He meets Unku, the Gipsy girl who takes him to her family’s wagon and gives him a peep into their life. He is introduced to the meaning of the class struggle in the ingenious and meaningful story of “The Island of the Fish,” told him by Klabunde, his friend Max’s Communist father. Eddie, Max and Unku save Eddie’s father from strike-breaking; they save Klabunde from prison; they have other exciting adventures. But it is not in the vivid variety and rapid pace of this story that its charm lies, but in the sparkling dialogue, the never-failing humor of this book. In the foreword we are told that the games mentioned in the story are no longer played, that workers’ children have a grimmer occupation, to help in the circulation of underground literature. Let us hope there will be occasion there again, and soon, for Wedding’s healthy laughter, magnified by the joyous full throats of proletarian victors. Nine unusual candid-camera photographs illustrate the book. Executed in the best German manner, they lend an up-to-the-minute note to the action.

Martin’s Annual is a collection of stories, poems and such oddments as recipes, a “Red” ABC, jokes, directions for building a model theatre, etc. Unfortunately the many illustrations, often in two colors, are not equal to the text. Despite this drawback, the *Annual* is more than worth its price because of the three stories by Geoffrey Trease already mentioned. His thumb-nail sketch of Cromwell, the dastardly middle-class revolutionary; his brilliant description of the explorers of the Chelyuskin; and his reportage of the Scotland to London Hunger March, are thrillingly told.

Perhaps an unduly optimistic note has been struck in this review. It is by no means true as yet that a usable literature for the children of class-conscious parents has come into existence. Entire age groups are as yet without a single book, good or bad. For some

reason writing for children has tempted too few proletarian writers, who have been willing to experiment in many mediums far less important or fruitful. It is to be hoped that this collection will stimulate them to such an experiment. There are several magazines which will welcome them with open arms.

RALPH and FREDERICA DESOLA.

Strength and Beauty

ANNUNCIATION, by Meridel Le Sueur.
Platen Press.

I DO NOT believe that it has yet been remarked of Meridel Le Sueur that she is something of a female Walt Whitman. To my knowledge there is no one writing in the republic who so sensitively weaves a beef-and-mutton reality with the most delicate prose. There is an amazing depth and warmth here and a strong drive toward life.

Annunciation is nothing more than a fourteen-page reflection of a poverty-stricken girl who is soon to give birth:

"Tonight, the world into which you are coming"—then I was speaking to the invisible child—"is very strange and beautiful. That is, the natural world is beautiful. I don't know what you will think of man, but the dark glisten of vegetation and the blowing of the fertile land wind and the delicate strong step of the sea wind, these things are familiar to me and will be familiar to you. I hope you will be like these things. I hope you will glisten with the glisten of ancient life, the same beauty that is in a leaf or a wild rabbit, wild sweet beauty of limb and eye. I am going on a boat between dark shores, and the river and the sky are so quiet that I can hear the scurrings of tiny animals on the shores, and their little breathings seem to be all around. . . . We too are at the mercy of many hunters."

Or:

When Karl has no money he does not come back at night. I go out on the street walking to forget how hungry I am. This is an old town and along the streets are many old strong trees. Night leaves hang from them ready to fall, dark and swollen with their coming death. Trees, dark, separate, heavy with the downhanging leaves, cool surfaces hanging in the dark. I put my hand among the leaf sheaves. They strike with a cool surface, their glossy surfaces surprising me in the dark. I feel like a tree swirling upwards too, muscular sap alive, with rich surfaces hanging from me, flaring outward, ricket-like and falling to my roots, a rich strong power in me to break through into a new life. And dark in me as I walk the streets of the decayed town are the buds of my child. I walk alone under the dark flaring trees. There are many houses with the lights shining out but you and I walk on the skirts of the lawns amidst the downpouring darkness. Houses are not for us. For us many kinds of hunger, for us a deep rebellion.

Strong stuff, good stuff. *Annunciation* is, I believe, the best thing Meridel Le Sueur has done since "I was Marching." The tough boys who feel that great art is merely a matter of splitting the infinitives and leaving out the commas would do well to read more of Meridel Le Sueur. She is one of the very few



As for me, if the revolution comes I shall simply ignore it.

Gardner Rea

revolutionary writers who combine a powerful realism with a deep sense of beauty.

NELSON ALGREN.

Growth of Dead Soil

THE IRON MOTHER, by Charles Braibant. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

THIS book has a nostalgia, but for things rotting. Far removed, one thinks about dead love that way, digging up lives that, in spite of their sick smell of mold, bring a thin memory of what they once were.

That books like *The Iron Mother* and Céline's *Journey to the End of Night*, which appeared last year, should come out of France or any country whose middle-class writers live on the memory of what it was once—alive, fighting for concepts like liberty and

equality, is not surprising. Words change qualities subtly, depending upon which class uses them. Liberty and equality have had many meanings in their time, but rarely disguised to the middle-class since it learned to qualify its god: liberty—Money, equality—Money, fraternity—Money.

Both *The Iron Mother* and Céline's book sprout from the same dead soil of middle-class France. But where Céline's book is a tragedy of decay, this is only a thin homily of impotence, its characters wavering, its small passions watered on the dirty backstreets of the provincial France of 1870, and today.

"The king of the middle-class world, the heir," says the author, "before the death of his family is no better than a man asleep. Until then, his function is to do nothing, to distract himself as best he can, to await

peacefully the glorious day when he shall receive the holy oil in the lawyer's office."

The story is of a man who died before he became king. His mother holds the purse. Waiting for her to die, he passes from one dream to the next, from one faint desire to another, all aborted and all essentially empty because they carry no meaning to his middle-class world, which he is not strong enough to despise. There is no value in dreams except when read in terms of purchase and sale. So he waits, emptying his own faint life and the lives of those he touches.

The author sits on a fence and spits down, but gently. Sometimes he is sorry that the middle class is decaying, sometimes he is glad. Sometimes he says "She (Marlise, the mother-symbol of the middle class) has often called my attention to the fact that poverty and sickness weaken the worker's arm. In order that the worker should give a good account of himself he must have enough to eat, he must be sturdy, and in the course of the year he must have a certain number of hours of amusement." And afterward, "All this does not alter the fact that Marlise has never refused a loaf of bread to a poor man or a bottle of wine to a sick one." If the author recognizes the nature of an exploiting class which gives the worker only enough to reproduce his labor and himself, doling out a few clipped pennies behind a paternal smirk, well, the world, even decayed, is too much with us. It is simpler to give sentiment for truth, nostalgia for action.

LOUIS LERMAN.

Anti-Negro Propaganda

DON'T YOU WEEP, DON'T YOU MOAN, by Richard Coleman. Macmillan Co. \$2.50.

"IN THIS novel," says the blurb, "there are all the superstition, the primitive fanaticism, the sensuality, light heartedness and easy humor of the black man. . . . There is the violence that cannot be dissociated from the illiterate Negro's character."

Laying the scene in Charleston, Coleman follows the above easy formula and strings together a series of incidents designed to bolster up a preconceived viewpoint. Everyone of the old minstrel show clichés is illustrated at great length. There are sensual dances, crap games, easy seductions, watermelon feasts, razor battles, fish fries and a final maudlin ending with our hero returned to the soil—all primitive people love the soil, you know.

The whites in the novel stand in careful contrast. They are Good White Folks who "love" and "trust" their Negroes and at the same time rule with a firm hand. One doesn't have to be told in so many words that it is just and proper that these whites should be the rulers and Negroes the ruled.

And, as Mr. Coleman is careful to point out, it follows that the only Negroes who amount to a tinker's damn are those reared

and tutored by the superior whites. All other black people, in his own words, are just "niggers."

The result is an intensely schematic novel, grist in the mill for the Hundred Percenters, and the rankest kind of anti-Negro propaganda.

LOREN MILLER.

Made in America

FASCISM AND AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP, by George Norlin. (The University of North Carolina Press. \$1.00.)

USING as his point of departure the advent of fascism in Germany, the author, who is president of the University of Colorado and was for some months before and after Hitler's coming into power guest professor at the University of Berlin, sets out to impress upon us the necessity of "preserving our democracy against the onslaughts of dictatorship."

Unfortunately, all that can be said for this treatise is that it displays some measure of literary taste and an amount of erudition fit and proper for a college president. If the problem with which it is supposed to deal were not so serious and immediate, one might in great kindness classify it as a hopelessly muddled essay by a sophomore who wished to impress his teacher with the

breadth of his reading.

But Mr. Norlin's essay cannot be dismissed so lightly. His generous concessions to the advantages of fascism in reviving Spartan virtues of simplicity and sacrifice, and his final plea for nationalism, is the dangerous stuff of which the intellectual followers of fascism are so readily made.

Mr. Norlin's Christianity is offended by the sentimental appeal which Hitler makes to Germany to follow the Old Norse Gods.

But Norlin would make a similar gesture in his desire to have the American "mob" turn away from their preoccupation with problems of economics and politics and follow the Hollywood version of *Little Women*. "In it" he found "a happy rediscovery of America." In this connection it is also interesting to note that on the one occasion where Mr. Norlin refers to Communism by name he condemns its "disintegrating influence in Germany" as a partial justification for the Hitler regime which he professes to despise, and that on other occasions, while he had something good to say about fascism, he clearly hints that "subversive" forces at work in our society should be suppressed.

Mr. Norlin is one of those university presidents, all too common to-day, who express dislike of fascism made in Germany, but yearn for an American brand.

BEN GOLDSTEIN.

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Brief Review

A BETTER ECONOMIC ORDER, by John A. Ryan. (Harper & Bros. \$2.50.) Father Ryan ought to read Earl Browder's pamphlet on religion to see how much better informed Communists are on religion than the holy brethren are on Communism. Ryan's book is easy reading, popular economics, making the banal misjudgments and misrepresentations of the Communist position and advocating, as might be expected, the continuation of the profit system, "subjected to the restraints of reason and justice" in a guild-like system, based upon "harmony" between employers and employees.

YOUNG WARD'S DIARY. Edited by Bernhard J. Stern. (G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$3.) The famous sociologist Ward kept a diary covering the formative years of his struggles to rise from the worker's lot, by hard work, into the realms of scholarship. It is naive and honest and contains interesting sidelights on contemporary social and economic conditions. Dr. Stern's excellent and comprehensive foreword is illuminating.

RICH MAN, POOR MAN, by Ryllis Alexander Goslin and Omar Pancoast Goslin. (Harper & Bros. \$1.) For simplicity of statement and illustration this picture-book primer, issued by the People's League for Economic Security, is a model. The problem could scarcely be more pithily and concretely stated. In the matter of solutions, however, we have a formation of "oughts" winged with "ifs"—Stable money; credit control; government operation of industries; government control of natural resources; power plants and transportation; government entering the field of distribution through a controlled system of cooperatives. But what kind of government would want to and be able to do these things; and how? These embarrassing considerations get no attention.

SHOVELS AND GUNS. The C. C. C. in Action, by James Lasswell. International Pamphlet No. 45. (International Pamphlets. 3 cents.) That the C. C. C., one of the very few administration measures tenderly let alone by Republican critics and enthusiastically indorsed by The Wall Street Journal, is a disguised method of militarizing the unemployed youth is forcefully and convincingly demonstrated in this well written and fully documented pamphlet.

MARBLE AND MUD, by Jane Burr. (The Compo Press. \$1.) Exposé, professedly from the inside of high society life, showing its degradation, the chief motif being the seeping into the upper class matriarchate of the psychology of the keptee. Poorly done.

ASYLUM, by William Seabrook. (Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$2.) The well-known travel writer describes how he had himself committed for alcoholism to "one of the old-

est and largest asylums in the East," and after seven months emerged cured. In the later chapters there is some interesting analysis of a drunkard's predicament, but in the main this book is aimed at popular entertainment at the expense of the inmates and the author misses a fine opportunity to describe how a man with obvious talents for geographical observation must become, under capitalism, a sensational jazz-writer.

WE TOO ARE DRIFTING, by Gale Wilhelm. (Random House. \$2.) This story of a Lesbian triangle in two hundred pages is well written in the Hemingway manner and has all the omissions and ingredients of a popular appeal, but deals only with the superficial and brutal side of the question. San Francisco in recent years is the background, but the reader will hear no echoes of the tremendous social struggles going on there at the same time.

I WAS HITLER'S PRISONER, by Stefan Lorant. (G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.75.) Lorant was not a Communist, Socialist, pacifist or Jew. He was a nationalist who like the Austrian Hitler, was of foreign extraction. He came from Hungary. The only explicable cause for his arrest was the fact of his editing a journal in competition with a more favored Nazi organ. His unique, gruesomely absorbing diary is a damning document in the overwhelming indictment of Naziism.

MEN OF TURMOIL: Biographies by Leading Authorities of the Dominating Personalities of Our Day. (Minton, Balch and Company. \$3.75.) The "great contemporaries" number thirty-seven. Being an English book, the largest national group is English. It includes political figures, inventors, writers, musicians, artists and holy men. The best biography by far is that of Stalin by Ralph Fox. The competition is keener for the worst. Disquieting is the fact that in this volume, expressing in the main a liberal, intellectual viewpoint, not only in the biographies of dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, Kemal and Ibn' Saud, but almost wherever allusion is made to the political scene, there is a curious reverence and yearning for dictatorship.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, by Dr. Kamil Krofta. (Robert W. McBride and Co. \$2.)

The author is the present head of the Czechoslovak Foreign Office and has served as his country's ambassador to four foreign capitals. His book is, consequently, an extremely poker-faced history—an official document intended for consumption abroad. In a consideration of his country's remote past, where Mr. Krofta can afford to relax from diplomatic caution, he shows no historical acumen. For instance, the movement for religious reform, the development of cities and their bourgeoisie, and the awakening of a Czech nationalism all of which happened together are treated separately without an effort to understand their inter-relationship.

CORNISH OF SCOTLAND YARD, by G. W. Cornish. (The Macmillan Company. \$2.) Crudely written, this book by an ex-superintendent of Scotland Yard reveals that an understanding of criminal psychology and of the social determinants of crime are apparently not regarded as important equipment for capitalist police officials.

TSAR OF FREEDOM. Life and Reign of Alexander II by Stephen Graham. Illustrated. (Yale University Press. \$3.50.)

The fact that in the reign of Alexander II, Russia produced Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Turgenev, makes Mr. Graham respectful. The present volume, therefore, is free of the peculiar racial slanders that marked his treatment of Russians in his biographies of Ivan the Terrible and Boris Godunov. Even here, however, speaking of the venality of czarist officialdom, he cannot forbear a return to racial prejudice and attributes it to oriental infiltration into the Russian stock. This is an indication of the unscientific temper of Mr. Graham's mind. Alexander II is a hero to him because he approaches the type of an English gentleman. The corrupt Greek Orthodox Church becomes a beautiful vessel of mysticism; the serf emancipation which fastened economic bonds upon the peasantry is seen in none of its economic realities; czarist imperialism is even given some laurels; and, of course, all references to Soviet Russia are in a tone of inarticulate horror. All that can be said for the author is that he has a good, plain, narrative style that had been much better employed on, let us say, ghost stories.

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HEARST OVER AMERICA

William Gropper

The World by the Tail

ROBERT FORSYTHE

BACK in the days when Upton Sinclair was a novelist and not a politician, there was a large body of opinion which held that he wasn't even a novelist. I cherish it as a slight evidence of my limited common sense that I was never taken in by this propaganda. I will confess to terrible moments when the sentence structure of Brother Upton's works gave me an acute twinge and I listened to the arguments of his detractors with an interest which might have been regarded as a mild form of treason, but I always had resistance enough left to understand that with all his faults Sinclair was writing about something important. At a time when Gene Stratton Porter was considered the American replica of Balzac, he was relating the horrors of the stockyards, of the coal mines and of the conscientious objector. Even those passages in which he attained a peak of lush gaucherie hitherto reached only by Mrs. Humphrey Ward could not obscure the strength of his novels. In truth nothing seemed able to ruin them and I was never startled by the fact that Sinclair was the best-known American author in foreign lands and even had the critical accolade of the great Georg Brandes. This always amazed the American literati and there was much smiling behind polite hands when a visiting critic, asked whom he most wanted to meet in America, invariably placed Sinclair among the first three. From every literary standard the novels were rotten and Sinclair could be outwritten by any one of a hundred other geniuses, but yet his novels were read and the others were first collected as rare first editions and later secreted out into the alley for disposal.

It is undoubtedly true that a great novelist can write a great book about a trivial theme, but the thing is rare and it is even more true that no second-rate man can do it. What is equally true is that a second-rate man can write a good book if he has the sense to tackle a worthwhile subject. Upton Sinclair happens to be a classic example of it. From any esthetic viewpoint, he was possibly seventh-rate. Without his social sense he would now be as forgotten as Walter Pater.

What prompts all this on a hot night is the latest book by A. J. Cronin, the English author. By the time I had reached page 10, I was doubled into the cramps which always attack me on encountering the written work of a Britisher and which were accentuated in this instance by a style which could only be accounted disastrous. The ordinary English novel of the present day is so smooth and well-written and innocuous that medical authorities who are overlooking it as a soporific are being derelict in their duty. Cronin's novel, *The Stars Look Down*, is

laid in the coal-mining country of Northern England. It recounts the story of the Fenwicks and the Barrases, with excursions into the lives of Joe Gowlan and Jenny Sunley. David Fenwick is the son of a miner who has led an unsuccessful strike and who later dies in the mine owned by Richard Barras. Barras is the only man living who knows that certain workings may eventually tap an abandoned mine and bring its flood of waters into the headings where the men are working. The waters break through, trapping and drowning a hundred men. The life of Arthur Barras, sensitive son of the cold-blooded owner, is as much affected by it as the life of David Fenwick. Both are idealists. Fenwick fights in the war; Barras, tortured by the death of the men in the mine and hating all death, becomes a conscientious objector, sent to jail by a draft board headed by his father. Joe Gowlan, getting ahead in any way no matter how devious, is a symbol of crude force and typical capitalistic methods. David Fenwick eventually becomes a poor member of parliament and rides into power with the MacDonald government. Then he finds what the mealy-mouthed promises of the Labor Party leaders mean when they come to the nationalization of the mines, the leading plank of their pre-election platform. Arthur Barras, inheriting the mining property from his father who is exposed as the murderer of the miners, fails in trying to make an ideal mining property against the competition of other cut-throat owners. In short, idealism is defeated. Joe Gowlan, the

crook, ends up owning the Barras property and having young Barras working for him. Fenwick, defeated by Gowlan in the election when MacDonald completed the treachery begun with the nationalization bill, is also found working in the former Barras mine as the only possible source of employment.

It is far from being a revolutionary novel in the affirmative sense. At rare intervals Cronin lets out his personal feelings about a civilization which could allow such conditions to exist, but the book ends in utter defeat and hopelessness. What is revolutionary about it are its implications. What is miraculous about it is that it is written by a successful English author. Only a critic who has followed the British literary scene in its later period of decay can understand what *The Stars Look Down* means.

As I have hinted, on the esthetic side it is no more literature than the works of Upton Sinclair. But compared with Cronin's previous novel, *Grand Canary*, it is a work of genius. The scene of the men trapped in the mine is really fine and even when the writing becomes so downright bad that it requires courage to continue, the strength of the story and the importance of the subject carries the reader along. It is almost a complete chart of the course which should be followed by a writer who knows he is not a genius and yet who desires that his grandchildren shall remember him with something but scorn.

It is not, however, an excuse for bad revolutionary writing. I think literary history has proved that a second-rate novel can be worthwhile if it has the courage to deal with important subjects. The effect will surely be no less tremendous if the author should happen to be a genius. Nobody who loves me will ever allow it to be said of me that I prefer mediocrity, but I can bring a word of

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comfort to the good writer who knows he will never dwell on Parnassus with the giants and yet wishes to live among his fellow men as an honest artist. Let the clever gentlemen be clever; let the Oxford graduates and the Princeton sophomores cling to their Scott Fitzgeralds and their Noel Cowards. Very small potatoes, my friends, very small potatoes, indeed. If you think otherwise, go back and read the plays of Bernard Shaw of his middle period. Last week at Jasper Deeter's Hedgerow Theatre at Philadelphia, I saw Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The great man is dating, say the esthetic critics. I ask only that *The Doctor's Dilemma* be placed

side by side with any of the Coward's comedies. Shaw is worth a thousand of him exactly for the reason that even in his most trivial plays he is dealing with important subjects and seeing them with the eyes of one who said that "Marx made a man of me." Martin Anderson-Nexo is worth a hundred Hemingways. We are called dogmatic when we speak in this manner. I say be damned to such charges. If truth is dogmatic, then we are dogmatic and even bumptious and narrow and uncultured. Comrades, I say it to you all over again: we have the world by the tail. Don't let the feeble little gentlemen worry you.

Five Prizes for Playwrights

A YEAR ago the working-class theatre faced a crisis: there were hundreds of hard-working, spirited acting groups eager to produce plays of social protest—but there were almost no suitable plays. Both actors and audiences had outgrown the conversion sketches and schematic recitations, the crude satires and confusing symbolisms which, having once served their necessary purposes, were now no longer adequate. Actors of outstanding talent offered themselves for service in the theatre of struggle but demanded sound, effective plays by which the working-class drama could literally prove itself a weapon.

Frequent pleas addressed to the professional revolutionary playwrights had remained unrewarded. Unlike Friedrich Wolf and Bert Brecht, their European colleagues who divide their time between the professional and working class theatres, our American dramatists found themselves too involved in Hollywood or Broadway on the professional left-wing theatre to answer the needs of the workers' groups. Suitable plays would not be forthcoming from this source, apparently it was necessary to turn elsewhere.

With this in mind, the editors of THE NEW MASSES and New Theatre organized a prize play contest. They hoped for "a pretty good play" but hardly expected to unearth a major dramatist whose prize-winning script would prove to be the greatest stimulus the working-class theatre movement has ever known: Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty*.

But the problem is not solved: the working-class Theatre is hungering for scripts. In order to stimulate the writing of short plays of social protest, the New Theatre League announces two contests:

(1) In conjunction with the American League Against War and Fascism, a contest for plays against war and fascism; first prize \$125, second prize \$50, third prize \$25.

(2) In conjunction with the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, a contest for a play about Angelo Herndon and another play on Negro life, a prize of \$50 to each.

The rules are as follows:

Plays must be thirty to sixty minutes long; any

scenic arrangement or theatrical form acceptable. Author's address must be enclosed in a sealed envelope with the name of his play on the outside. A playwright may submit any number of scripts. All manuscripts will be registered; those rejected manuscripts will be accompanied by careful criticisms. All plays should be sent to the Repertory Dept., New Theatre League Box 67, Station O, New York City.

New Theatre League reserves all rights including publication and performance of the prize-winning plays and 50 percent of the ensuing royalties (the playwright's royalties will be considerable since the winning plays will receive nation-wide production). New Theatre League reserves the right to award no prizes if the scripts submitted are below the standard. Competition for all five prizes closes October 1, 1935. Awards will be announced in November.

Between Ourselves

A FINAL meeting of the judges in the prize contest for a proletarian novel, conducted jointly by THE NEW MASSES and the John Day Company, Publishers, was to be held Friday, Aug. 16. The judges are Granville Hicks, William F. Dunne, Alan Calmer, Richard J. Walsh and Crichton Rimington. We hope to be able to make an announcement of the prize winning novel within the next week or two.

Paul Novick, who writes on Abraham Cahan's career, is managing editor of The Jewish Morning Freiheit.

Sasha Small is the editor of The Labor Defender.

Alfred Hirsch is executive secretary of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners.

Boris Israel has recently returned from the South, where he has done organizing and editorial work.

The political career of Julius Streicher "king of pornographers" and the most virulent of all the anti-Semites in the whole Nazi hierarchy, is described in an article in next week's issue by N. Kornev.

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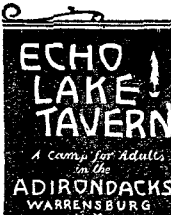
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